The Sociopragmatics of Stance

Community, language,
and the witness depositions
from the Salem witch trials

Peter J. Grund

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Table of contents

Acknowledgments

The Salem witch trials represent one of the most tragic events in US history, and I recognize that my research is indebted to its actors, whether accusers or victims. While using the trial documents, this book does not aim to resolve the many conundrums of this event. At the same time, it does contextualize the actors and social moves in the trials, and as such hopefully contributes to greater understanding of the trials and especially the powerful role of language in the events.

July 2021, Peter J. Grund

"this Is the first to bee Read"
Introduction

1.1   Introduction and aims

This book is about stance in a historical community.[1] Specifically, it investigates the ways in which witnesses and the recorders of their testimonies (or depositions) express "personal feelings, attitudes, value judgments, or assessments" (Biber et al. 1999: 966) during the witch trials in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692–1693. I demonstrate that stance expressions are ubiquitous in the 457 witness depositions extant from the trials, and that they are employed variably and strategically for particular communicative and identity-related purposes: they help signal and frame the nature of the evidence presented, the (desired) role of the deponents in the trial process, and the relationships of the deponents to others (cf. Du Bois 2007). Importantly, I argue that stance at Salem should be viewed as a result of, in conjunction with, and as inherent in a Community of Practice (CoP) that developed during the trial proceedings. Viewing stance at Salem in this way reveals the synchronic-historical dynamics of stance, as it is embedded in a particular CoP's concerns and goals and its members' identity-related negotiations and larger social aspirations.

Some of these dynamics are illustrated by Mary Walcott's deposition cited in (1).

> (1)
> [Hand 1] Mary Walcott Ageed sixteen yeares Testifieth and saith that on the 12th of may 1692 in the Euening I saw the Apparition of gooddy Buckly come to me and hurt me And tortor<e>d me most dreadfully by pinching and choaking of me and twesting of my nick seuerall times and she brought me a book and would have <me to> write my name in it or elce giue my consent that she might d<o> write it for me I told h<u>r that I would not touch her book nor write in it nor giue consent to her tho she killd me then she choaked me and many times she said ["said" written over "told"] that she would kill me that night if she had power for to do it I tould her that I did not fear hur I told her {y[t]} god is aboue the deuil: and I hope that he would deliuer me out of her hands and the deuils to: {and} seuerall times she has bet me and seuerall others times sence she has tormented me [Hand 2] allso I being caried up to wills hill on the 16th of may to see the affletd persons

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>there: I saw there the apperishtion of gooddy Buckly afflecting daniell willknes: also on the day of the Examination of of Sarah Buckly being the 18th may 1692 Sarah Buckly or hir Apperanc did most greviously torment me dureing the time of hir Exami[Lost] [= examination] ffor if she did but look upon me she would strick me down or allmost choak me also on the day of hir Examination I saw Sarah Buckly or hir Apperanc most greviously torment the bodyes of Abigail williams <&> ~~mercy lewes~~ and Ann putnam and I veryly beleue in my heart that Sarah Buckly is a wicth and that she has often affleted me and the afforesaid parsons by acts of wicthcraft. [Hand 3] Mary Walcot ownd yᵉ truth of yᵉ above written evidence: to: yᵉ grand <?> Inquest Septʳ 14: 1692 upon oath   (*RSWH*, no. 171)[2]

Walcott's deposition reveals several notable framing moves. It has Walcott appealing to different sources for her knowledge, including direct visual perception ("I saw there the apperishtion…"), belief ("I veryly beleue in my heart…"), and statements attributed to the specter of the alleged witch ("she said…that she would kill me"). These epistemological framings are also stance-related: they allow the deponent to express the certainty of the experiences related ("I saw it happen!"), and they are also indicative of the deponent's claims of privileged knowledge ("The accused spoke to me personally and revealed herself to me in spectral form!") (cf. Jaffe 2009b: 7). The severity of the alleged affliction is emphasized in various ways, not least by the repetition of the verbs TORMENT and AFFLICT and by intensifying adverb phrases such as *most dreadfully* and *most grievously*. This is a victim that apparently not only suffered, but whose victim status is beyond normal measures.

Not all depositions exhibit the same stance moves; rather, complex patterns emerge related to specific deponents, groups of deponents, types of depositions, identity of the recorder, and other factors. These complexities are at the heart of what different actors in the trials tried to accomplish in expressing certain stances, and the emerging picture underscores the importance of studying historical stance dynamics in particular sociohistorical contexts. Not surprisingly, language was then, as it is now, a highly social tool that influences and is influenced by the relationships of people, their community building, and sense of self.

The book thus explores a number of interrelated questions:

– How is stance expressed in the Salem depositions and what kinds of stance are signaled?
– How is the expression of stance connected to various community-related, social, legal, and communicative purposes?

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2. Examples follow the text as given in *RSWH*, which tries to capture the handwritten documents as closely as possible, retaining the original spelling, punctuation, and use of abbreviations. Brackets of various kinds enclose unclear/uncertain text (<…>), text added above the line ({…}), and editorial commentary ([…]). For the full editorial principles of the edition, see *RSWH* (91–94).

–   What does a focused study of stance embedded in a particular historical community tell us more broadly about the sociopragmatics of language in historical periods, especially the connection between language use and community construction and community roles?

By asking these questions and adopting this approach, the book addresses a number of research gaps and enters into a number of scholarly conversations, as the next section specifies. It puts the spotlight on the systematic, communal and social uses of historical stance in a North American context from a synchronic-historical perspective. Each of these angles – the systematic, the communal, the North American, and the synchronic-historical – adds a piece that is currently missing or underdeveloped in current research on historical stance, but the strength of this book also lies in the intertwining of these different themes. It is important to note, that, while using the Salem depositions as the source material, the book is not about Salem per se; the Salem depositions represent a situated lens through which to view the sociopragmatics of stance.

1.2   Research context and gaps

This book weaves together a number of different approaches and topics, and it aims to contribute to several ongoing conversations – about empirical data, methodology, and theory – in the field of English historical linguistics. Most broadly, with a context-dependent and social phenomenon such as stance, the study is couched within historical pragmatics and historical sociolinguistics, and the merger of the two in historical sociopragmatics. Since Jacobs and Jucker's articulation of the field of historical pragmatics in 1995, numerous works have pursued the intersection between historical language use and pragmatic context, showing the significant insights that can be gained by such approaches (for an overview, see, e.g., Jucker and Taavitsainen 2010). My study also emphasizes the importance of the social (Culpeper 2011): it represents a synchronic approach in historical sociolinguistics (Grund 2017b), weighing both the social setting and (situational) context. The study draws on related modern sociolinguistic work in this vein, as the concepts of a CoP, sociolinguistic and positional stance, and different semiotic systems have been important for understanding similar communal language dynamics in modern times (e.g., Eckert 2000, 2008; Jaffe 2009a; see below). While it is probably safe to say that most work in English historical linguistics is diachronic, my study underscores that we have much to learn from the synchronic picture of individual periods and communities. Indeed, corpus data and broader investigations can make the complex situation on the ground difficult or impossible to see; texts and genres clearly

represent dynamic communities and their flexible and often conscious choices, especially as regards sociopragmatic features like stance.

Indeed, this book gives a systematic picture how the deponents and recorders responded linguistically to the demands put on them by the legal and social context, and also, arguably, how the actors made very conscious use of linguistic resources to project a particular position and identity within the Salem CoP. Unlike most previous work dealing with historical legal texts, this study does not consider texts that deal directly with courtroom dynamics, such as the questioning of witnesses (e.g., Archer 2005) or interactional stances (e.g., Cecconi 2012; Chaemsaithong 2012, 2014). As discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2, the Salem depositions do not for the most part represent written versions of testimony delivered *viva voce* during courtroom proceedings; rather, they were recorded in a different context, and, if admitted into evidence, they were read during the trial (or Grand Jury hearings) and sworn to by the witnesses (Grund 2012b). The depositions are thus not constructed around a sequence of questions (at least not overtly), and the deponents did not have to take on certain interactional stances in response to the interrogating lawyers and their stances. At the same time, the depositions were clearly written with an audience in mind, or indeed constructed a particular kind of audience by the framing provided by the deponents and recorders. Along with these differences in genre and production circumstances, my focus on a witch trial in Puritan New England broadens the perspective of this line of research, which has mostly focused on proceedings in England, usually from high-profile cases (though, for some earlier research on Salem, see Hiltunen 1996; Doty and Hiltunen 2002; Archer 2002, 2005; Chaemsaithong 2009). While my study of course contributes to and expands this line of research, I also argue that the situated picture presented in this book has broader implications for how we understand and study stance in the history of English.

The central framework for the linguistic analysis undertaken in this book comes from research on "stance." Stance has received substantial attention in previous scholarship. The notion has been treated under a number of different headings, including (among others) "evaluation," "appraisal," "modality," "hedging," "subjectivity," "intensity," and "affect" (for overviews, see Thompson and Hunston 2000; Englebretson 2007b; Jaffe 2009b; for a more detailed review, see 4.2). While the concept is defined and studied in various ways in previous work, a clear picture has emerged of the complexity of stance and the multiple and multivalent forms and functions of stance resources. Indeed, stance has been shown to be a crucial component of virtually every use of language, allowing speakers and writers to signal not only their attitude toward or evaluation of a particular statement or object but also to indicate their alignment or disalignment with other speakers and writers (Du Bois 2007).

Stance has also started to attract interest in historical research. Much work has focused on the development of stance resources over time or the inventory of stance features in different periods (e.g., Fitzmaurice 2003, 2004; Biber 2004; Busse 2010; Gray, Biber and Hiltunen 2011). What my study contributes to this picture is a focused, systematic exploration of how members of a particular historical community employ stance marking for specific communicative and social purposes: in other words, we get a synchronic, historical snapshot of stance in use (see 4.2.3 for a discussion of other historical work in this vein). We see how the stance work carried out by users of language can only be fully understood if studied within the social context in which it was performed. I adopt a function-to-form approach (Taavitsainen and Jucker 2010: 13–14) to identifying stance markers instead of the lexical approach as in much previous historical research (see 4.2.1 and 4.2.2). This means that, instead of searching for a set of predetermined lexical forms, my study sees stance marking as contextually construed and therefore identifies features as relevant markers by their contextual value. While this approach entails methodological challenges, I argue that it is necessary in order to complement other broad-scale and mainly lexical approaches to stance.

A crucial leg of my argument about the function of stance at Salem is the notion of a Community of Practice (CoP). This concept was initially introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991) and elaborated by Wenger (1998) and Wenger et al. (2002), among others, as a "social theory of learning" (Wenger 1998: 4). The notion was quickly adopted in sociolinguistics to explain the dynamics of linguistic variation in communities (e.g., Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1999; Eckert 2000; Meyerhoff 2002), and it has recently been explored in English historical linguistics to explain variation and change (e.g., Fitzmaurice 2010a; Kopaczyk and Jucker 2013). As I show in more detail in Chapter 3, it provides a productive tool for understanding the actors' linguistic choices and social moves (as well as aspects of the historical and legal dynamics of the trials). Three features characterize a CoP: mutual engagement, a joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire (Wenger 1998: 72–73). These parameters are a comfortable fit for the community that organized around the Salem trial proceedings. The justices, court officials, accusers, and witnesses were engaged with each other (to various extents) in their joint enterprise of ferreting out, prosecuting, and executing witches. In doing so, they shared a repertoire of routines, actions, behaviors, and, crucially, discourses, genres, and linguistic moves. Indeed, stance features are an essential part of this repertoire. What this kind of study of stance centered on a CoP contributes to our current understanding of historical patterns is the systematic consideration of the crucial role of social positioning and projection of identity (cf. Jaffe 2009b).

To my knowledge, this is the first book-length study that focuses on the language in the Salem documents, and historical sociopragmatics in the North American

colonial context more broadly. The Salem witch trials have of course received considerable attention in historical research (for an overview, see, e.g., Rosenthal 2009), and the many ambiguities and gaps in the textual evidence continue to fuel popular and scholarly interest: the past few years alone have seen the publication of several book-length studies (e.g., Baker 2015; Ray 2015; Schiff 2015). The analysis undertaken in this book provides some new angles on long-standing questions of the historical context of the trials, such as why the core group of accusers consisting of girls and young women were afforded so much influence. However, as hinted in 1.1, the aim is not to attempt to resolve some of the lingering conundrums surrounding the trials through a careful analysis of the language of the depositions. Instead, the Salem depositions are used as a lens through which to investigate the sociopragmatic dynamics of stance.

As has been shown in a range of article-length studies, the extant court documents provide ample, beneficial material for linguistic studies into the development of early American English, early modern legal language and genres, and discoursal and pragmatic aspects of historical language use (e.g., Alexander 1928; Kytö 1991, 2005; Rissanen 1997; Doty and Hiltunen 2002, 2009; Archer 2002, 2005; Pablé 2008; Doty 2007, 2018; Grund 2007a, 2012a; Chaemsaithong 2009; Peikola 2012; Grund et al. 2021). The Salem trial documents are particularly appealing for historical sociopragmatic work by virtue of being so well-researched from a historical perspective: we know a great deal about the social and legal circumstances of the trials and the relationships among the trial participants. I make use of this historical information to construct a situated picture of how stance expressions were used for particular sociopragmatic purposes, to respond to communicative needs in a particular historical setting. While this study would seem to give a very specific snapshot, whose broader representativeness may be unclear, I argue that it is an excellent representation of the complexity that is found in specific cases and situations. Granted, situations and cases may differ substantially in dynamics, but we need to see what happens when we drill down into the details of those dynamics to understand a complex phenomenon such as stance.

1.3   The Salem witch trials: A brief overview

As highlighted in 1.2, this book relies on the sociohistorical and legal context of the Salem trials in order to provide a sociopragmatic interpretation of language use in the Salem depositions. While the details of this context will be discussed as necessary in later chapters (e.g., Chapters 2 and 3), this section sketches more broadly the historical circumstances of the trials and outlines some of the explanations of the events; the description sets the scene for understanding the more detailed account

of the social and legal moves by witnesses and the recorders of their depositions that are at the center of this book.[3]

Accusations of witchcraft were not uncommon in New England before the Salem trials, and some had led to legal proceedings (Demos 1982: 401–409; Karlsen 1987: 1–45). But in Salem, the persecution and prosecution of alleged witches reached a new level for North America: over 150 people were accused of witchcraft, and nineteen were executed by hanging (one was pressed to death for refusing to be put on trial by jury); and the witch hunt spread geographically from Salem Village (present-day Danvers, MA) to include a number of adjacent communities (Andover, Boxford, Marblehead, Ipswich, Salem Town (now Salem), among many others). Not surprisingly, what we can tell for certain about the motivations and causes of the trials is limited. But the ca. 1,000 legal documents (arrest warrants, hearing records, witness depositions, indictments, etc.) as well as contemporaneous published and unpublished accounts of the trials allow us to reconstruct the course of the events with some confidence (for an overview of these documents, see Grund et al. 2009; Trask 2009; Grund 2020a; for a day-by-day description of the events based on these records, see Roach 2002). The first accusations surfaced in Salem Village in late February 1692. The three accused were socially peripheral in the community and thus likely targets of such accusations: Sarah Good was poor and was forced to beg for a living; Sarah Osborne had discontinued her church attendance; and Tituba was the village minister Samuel Parris's Barbadian slave. The legal machinery was quickly set in motion. Official arrest warrants were issued on February 29 for "Suspition of Witchcraft" (*RSWH*, nos. 1–2) and hearings followed the very next day before local magistrates to determine whether there was cause for legal proceedings. Good and Osborne staunchly denied the charges of acting witchcraft on the four girls and young women listed in the arrest warrants: Elizabeth (Betty) Parris, Ann Putnam Jr., Abigail Williams, and Elizabeth Hubbard. Tituba, on the other hand, relented (possibly after torture), and offered that she had seen multiple signatures in the Devil's book (including those of Good and Osborne). This revelation of yet more witches had a chilling and immediate effect. Accusations followed rapidly over the coming months, mainly instigated by the core group of accusers consisting of the four young girls (joined by a few others; see 3.3.4). But

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3. This introduction relies on the standard scholarly literature in the area, such as Robinson (1991), Rosenthal (1993), Hoffer (1997), and Norton (2002), among others. For readable overviews, see also Rosenthal (2009) and the introduction to Godbeer (2018). Although the description of the sequence of historical events and some of the main themes differs little among these accounts (as they are based on the contemporaneous court documents, and printed sources such as Lawson 1692, Cotton Mather 1693, Calef 1700, and Hale 1702), there are of course differences, especially in the interpretation of the origins and causes of the trials. When necessary, these differences will be noted. A more condensed version of this section appears in Grund (2020a).

unlike the original targets, the accused varied widely in their social characteristics: men as well as women of various ages and social standings, from a number of different communities, were charged with practicing witchcraft.

It was some time before the actual trials could begin. As Ray (2015: 67) notes, the legal process in New England had three major steps: (1) the initial complaint, arrest, and preliminary hearing before a magistrate; (2) Grand Jury hearing; and (3) trial. Blocked by the interim governor, the Salem magistrates could not proceed beyond the first step before May 1692, when the new Governor, Sir William Phips, arrived from England and instituted a special Court of Oyer and Terminer to hear the witchcraft cases. In the meantime, the accusers were not idle, and neither were the magistrates: accusations and supporting evidence poured in, which produced a flurry of arrest warrants, summonses for witnesses, and hearings; and the jails quickly filled up.

Among the evidence brought in against alleged witches were stories of mysterious events, death of cattle, and unexplained illnesses going back twenty to thirty years (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 281, 302; also Chapters 5 and 8). The main sources of damning evidence, however, came in the form of claims of personal affliction (especially spectral affliction) and confessions. The core group of accusers in particular, whose membership varied somewhat over time (see 3.3.4), claimed to be attacked by the accused often in spiritual form; they fell into spasmodic fits and complained of grievous tortures and torments (e.g. *RSWH*, nos. 301, 305). What became a sticking point in the trial process was whether evidence that could not be externally verified was legitimate: even if the accusations are not false, couldn't the Devil take on the shape of the innocent? Both sides had strong proponents among community members at large, officers of the court, and clergy. Indeed, the reliance on spectral evidence was legitimate according to English common law, although witchcraft authorities such as Richard Bernard and William Perkins rejected it (Ray 2015: 79–80). Most importantly, the justices who presided over the Court of Oyer and Terminer expressed their conviction of the reality of spectral affliction. The head justice and lieutenant governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, William Stoughton, remained remorseless in his persecution even when the belief had mostly been abandoned in the later part of the trial process in late 1692 and 1693. While the court and its procedures had strong initial support, boosted by the Puritan luminary Cotton Mather's defense in *Wonders of the Invisible World* (1693),[4] powerful criticism of the court and spectral evidence led to Governor Phips withdrawing the mandate of the Court of Oyer and Terminer in October 1692. This did not mean, however, that the trials were officially over, but the power of spectral

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4.   Cotton Mather had previously urged caution in the use of spectral evidence (e.g., Ray 2015: 82–83).

evidence and hence the accusers diminished. The procedure had already reaped its victims, however: nineteen had hanged after conviction by the court.

In January 1693 and in subsequent months, the Superior Court of Judicature convened (with some of the same justices as members and with Stoughton as the chief judge) in order to deal with the cases that had not been concluded by the earlier Court of Oyer and Terminer. Indeed, over fifty people had been convicted or were still awaiting trial in prison. When spectral evidence had fallen into disrepute, another source of evidence gained prominence: confessions. This evidence was not new. Tituba had confessed at the very beginning of the outbreak, but her confession had not led to execution but only imprisonment. Together with this illustrative example, the magistrates' promises of mercy if the accused confessed (e.g., *RSWH*, no. 173, 424) firmly established the way to escape the gallows. This procedure went against received practice based on the biblical injunction that "thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exodus 22:18). Undoubtedly, some confessions were also forced (see the statement by Francis Dane cited in 3.1). A flood of confessions and concomitant accusations of others followed, especially as the center of accusations shifted from Salem to Andover. But like the reliance on spectral evidence, the handling of confessions came under severe criticism. Thomas Brattle, a Boston merchant and Harvard-educated mathematician, skewered the court for lending an ear to these, in his view, patently false confessions and for even trying to "vindicate these confessours, and salve their contradictions, by proclaiming, that the Devill takes away their memory, and imposes upon their brain" (Burr 1914: 173). Paradoxically, these confessions did not only lead to (initial) salvation for the confessors but also to the gallows for people they accused who chose not to confess falsely. At the same time, the confessors did not escape: they were imprisoned and some even convicted, but none of the confessors was executed.

Gradually, the status of confessions and hence the confessors changed, especially as the Superior Court of Judicature convened and spectral evidence (the other major source of allegedly incriminating evidence) had been removed from serious consideration. Confessions became strong evidence against the accused, and naturally recantations followed (Robinson 1991: 242). But in the face of the court (and especially its chief judge, Stoughton), the Grand Juries refused to send many of the cases on to trial, and some were acquitted by the trial jury or pardoned by Governor Phips. Although some of the accusers and judges expressed public regret years after and victims and their relatives filed for restitution several decades later, by May 1693 the Salem witch trials had officially come to an end.

Much scholarship has been devoted to explaining the causes and motivations behind the Salem witch trials (for a good, but now dated overview, see Mappen 1996). Understandably, much of the attention has centered on the behavior of the accusers, and especially the core group of young women and girls: what originated

and encouraged their accusations and why were their accusations so favorably received in the community? In popular descriptions, medical explanations have been and continue to be prominent. This attention stems in particular from Caporael's (1976) suggestion that the behavior of many of the accused should be ascribed to the hallucinatory effects of ergot poisoning, from ingesting contaminated rye. Caporael's thesis was quickly and convincingly refuted by Spanos and Gottlieb (1976), who noted that the textual evidence was not consistent with the effects of known outbreaks of ergotism. This refutation has done little to discredit the thesis in non-scholarly contexts. Similarly, Carlson's (1999) claim of the accusers suffering from encephalitis has been dismissed as untenable (Norton 2002: 327, n. 3).

A range of (socio-)psychological factors has also been explored. As early as 1943, Caulfield suggested that the girls were hysterics, acting out their underlying fear and suffering in a repressive religious society. Along similar lines, the girls' destructive behavior has been construed as teenage rebellion against a Puritan world that under normal circumstances afforded them no power and influence, against mother figures, or against motherhood (e.g., Starkey 1949; Ryan 1975: 80–81; Demos 1982). Hansen (1969), who famously suggests that there were actual practicing witches at Salem, even attributes mental illness to the accusers, who were hysterical (in a psychological/medical sense) after witnessing witchcraft practiced in the community and hearing about the threat of the Devil and witches from elders. While psychological factors no doubt played a role, few historians of the Salem trials nowadays appear to put much credence in such factors as the sole driving forces for the behaviors.

Not surprisingly, fraudulent behavior on the part of the accusers (and community members and the authorities who believed them) has been a prominent explanation. This is not a modern idea. Contemporaries such as Thomas Brattle in his unpublished letter (Burr 1914) and Robert Calef in his *More Wonders of the Invisible World* (1700) pointed a finger in that direction (although they did not exclude the possibility that the accusers were influenced by the Devil). Witnesses during the trials themselves also provided some evidence to that effect (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 497, 500). It has been a particularly strong idea among some modern scholars (e.g., Robinson 1991; Rosenthal 1993). The question is of course what would have brought on such behavior. Psychological factors such as the ones described above were undoubtedly important, but perhaps the social or sociological context is even more influential. Indeed, the sociohistorical lens has proved long-lived, although it is appealed to in very different ways in modern scholarship. Most famously perhaps, Boyer and Nissenbaum (1997 [1974]) focused on social dynamics in Salem Village, and especially on the relationships and networks of two families: the Putnams and the Porters. Boyer and Nissenbaum's (1997 [1974]) argument relies on the contrasting characteristics and the competing aims of the two families. The resulting

divisions are manifested, they claim, in most of the accusers being in the Putnam camp and the accused predominantly among Porter supporters. Their approach has been criticized (e.g., Ray 2015: 3–4, 188–189), however, not least for centering exclusively on Salem, while a significant number of the accused came from elsewhere, especially Andover.

Gender dynamics provide another social interpretive lens. While not focusing exclusively on Salem, Karlsen (1987) shows how women were overwhelmingly targeted in accusations of witchcraft. Often such women fell outside the normal Puritan frame for women: they manifested behaviors or had power that disturbed the social order. Accusations of witchcraft became a mechanism of removing such elements. Looking similarly at a broader context, but a geopolitical and ethnic one, Norton (2002) sees strong influences from the larger political climate in New England, especially the Second Indian War (or King William's War), on the mindset of some of accusers and justices at Salem. They interpreted the events at Salem in light of their experience with the Indian wars, which they believed represented another instantiation of the Devil's machinations.

In the end, the search for a single driving force and simple explanations is bound to be futile, as some recent research in particular has shown (Baker 2015; Ray 2015). Instead, it is in the combination of social, gender-related, geopolitical, and personal factors that the origins and motivations lie. No doubt the New Englanders' belief in the Devil's presence and his attacks on the Puritan project in North America through his presumed minions of witches and Indians fueled the witchcraft crisis, as did Puritan religious beliefs and sense of social order, personal grudges and feuds, gender bias, and individual ambitions and convictions. Some of these themes surface again in later chapters as we explore the intersection between language and sociopragmatic context during the Salem witch trials.

1.4 Chapter outline

The book is organized into nine chapters. Following this general introduction in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 ("Testifieth and saith": The Salem witch trial witness depositions) outlines the characteristics of the textual material (457 witness depositions). It provides information about the production context of the depositions, including the legal procedures involved in recording and presenting testimony in late seventeenth-century New England. Most importantly, I discuss the crucial role of the recorder as a mediator of the testimony, and the possible impact of this mediation on a study of stance. The chapter also provides some specifics of the corpus of Salem depositions.

Chapter 3 ("we thought we did doe well": The Salem witch trials as a community of practice) introduces the framework of a "Communities of Practice" and outlines its importance for the study. I use historical and legal research on the trials as well as primary textual evidence to describe the characteristics of the Salem CoP, and suggest ways to understand different groups of actors during the trial process. The CoP concept provides an important interpretive context for the language of stance, where the linguistic framing of the depositions and deponents is part of the shared repertoire of resources that the community members made use of and negotiated.

Chapter 4 ("I verily beleue in my hart that Martha Carrier is a most dreadfull wicth": Methodology and overview of linguistic strategies of stance) describes the methodological framework of the study, drawing on stance research from a number of different fields, including discourse/conversational analysis, corpus linguistics, and sociolinguistics. It lays out some of the methodological and theoretical difficulties of studying stance and the strategies used to overcome and mitigate such challenges. I also detail procedures of retrieving and analyzing stance data, placing my own approach in the context of research on present-day and historical stance.

Chapter 5 ("in A sudden, terible, & strange, unusuall maner": Evaluating experience) shows how the witnesses and the recorders of their testimonies employed evaluatively-laden vocabulary, such as *strange*, *preternatural*, *disturbance*, and *distress*. It focuses on usage in two broad functional contexts: the evaluation of the central experience that is being reported in the depositions and the evaluation of actors (especially the accusers and the accused) involved in the trials process. I demonstrate how various groupings of depositions emerge from this exploration, with different kinds of stance moves framing those narratives. Importantly, we see multilayered distinctions between depositions that focus on describing afflictions and depositions that center on unexplained events, illnesses, and death, and between depositions for and against the accused.

Chapter 6 ("I haue ben most greviously affleted": Intensifying experience) focuses on markers that express various degrees along a scale, from a maximal end (as in "I am *thorowly* healed") to a minimal end of a scale (as in "my housband and I could *hardly* hold it"). These markers allow the deponents to play up or downtone various aspects of their testimony. The chapter demonstrates that these stance markers were used strategically by some witnesses to stress that their experiences were especially relevant for the trials and helpful for the conviction of the accused. This stance also helped them show alignment with and the central role they play in the Salem CoP.

Chapter 7 ("I saw the Apperishtion of Rebekah nurs": Sourcing experience) investigates the use of evidentials or markers of source of information, including features of visual (e.g. *see*, *according to my observation*) or auditory perception (e.g. *hear*, *in my hearing*), belief, inference, and conviction (e.g., *believe*, *to my understanding*,

and *seem*), and so-called quotatives (*e.g., they said*, *as reported*). I show that, in addition to allowing the deponents to provide some basis for their claims, these markers enabled them to illustrate (among other things) their certainty, project credibility, and claim privileged knowledge. They also made it possible to signal the centrality of some witnesses' contribution to the goal of the Salem CoP.

Chapter 8 ("we perceiued hir hellish temtations by hir loud outcries": Stance profiles) brings together the discussions from Chapters 5–7 to construct the overall "stance profile" of different types of depositions, different groupings of deponents, and different recorders. It also considers additional stance moves that reinforce previously perceived patterns (including the use of negation and the lack of overt stance marking). Significant divisions among the depositions emerge in considering these stance profiles, which impact our understanding of the sociopragmatics of stance. I also discuss the central role of one recorder, Thomas Putnam, in framing the linguistic strategies of the core accusers (and others).

Chapter 9 ("and further saith not": Conclusion) brings together the findings from the various chapters and discusses the implications of the study for our understanding of stancetaking in the history of English and the importance of studying stance as part of community construction and situational context. More broadly, I emphasize especially the significance of scholarly attention to synchronic-historical usage in our reconstruction of the history of English.

"Testifieth and saith"

The Salem witch trial witness depositions

2.1   Introduction

The witness depositions extant from the Salem witch trials contain vivid stories and recollections of various "mysterious" events, some taking place the same day as the testimony was recorded, others dating back twenty to thirty years.[1] There are narratives about dying cattle, visitations of talking ape-like creatures, disappearing beer, conversations with the dead, and, of course, the alleged afflictions perpetrated by witches in spectral shape (*RSWH*, nos. 352, 278, 41, 385, and 53). We also find character testimony, where deponents attest to the virtuous life and behavior of an accused or try to refute charges of witchcraft (see 8.4). What they all share is the function of providing an account of "a person's experiences or actions in a particular context" pertaining to a case against a person accused of witchcraft (Grund and Walker 2011: 15). As later chapters show, these stories are negotiated and framed by various stance strategies, emphasizing the deponents' view of the evidence they present and their role in the Salem witch trial CoP. Integral to our understanding how such strategies are exploited and for what purposes they are utilized is the historical and legal context in which the depositions were produced and used (see also Grund 2012b). This context also clarifies the sometimes puzzling variation in form and language among individual depositions or, conversely, the noteworthy similarity among some of them, even down to particular formulations. Part of understanding stance is thus understanding what the genre of depositions constitutes, its place in the legal process, and the role it plays for the deponents in the Salem CoP more broadly.

This chapter places the Salem depositions in a text-historical, legal, and social context. It reveals not only how the Salem depositions are constrained by legal requirements, but also how they could be molded to fit various goals and purposes (2.2). I also explore the intricate co-construction of witness depositions, blending the voices of deponents and recorders. While the scribal situation has been traditionally ignored in scholarship on Salem, I follow recent research in arguing that

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1.   The chapter title quote comes from *RSWH*, no. 167.

the recorders played a crucial role in shaping the extant trial documents (2.3 and 2.4). The role of the recorder has a major, but not always easily distinguishable impact on how we interpret linguistic patterns in the depositions, including stance. Indeed, the identity and role of the recorder is further problematized in Chapter 3 and shown to be relevant throughout the linguistic investigation in Chapters 5–8. Finally, in 2.5, I discuss the characteristics of the corpus of Salem depositions used for the study of stance, including its size and witness count.

2.2   Production and use

Witness statements could be delivered in a variety of ways during the Salem trials, and they are recorded in different textual forms. The examination documents, which represent the interrogation of an alleged witch during a pretrial hearing, at times include short testimonies by witnesses, often because these witnesses were called upon during the examination to corroborate or refute a claim just made by the accused (Robinson 1991: 15). In (1), both Benjamin Wilkins and Peter Prescott testify against John Willard during his examination. As in the case of Wilkins's and Prescott's statements, these testimonies tend to be brief and accusatory, and examination documents instead focus on the interrogation and answers of the alleged witch.[2]

> (1)
> […] You say you would bewitch your Grand-father because you, or your appearance saith he prays that the Kingdom of Satan may be thrown down.
> He offered large talk
> We do not send for you to preach
> Benj[a] Wilkins gave in evidence of his unnaturall usage to his wife.
> You had much need to boast of your affections
> There are a great many lyes told, I would desire my wife might be called
> Peter Prescot testifyed that he with his own mouth told him of his beating of his wife […]   (*RSWH*, no. 173)

Limited testimony was also recorded at other stages of the court procedure. We find short statements from the hearings before the Grand Jury (or Jury of Inquest), which would determine whether the accused would face trial (Trask 2009: 50; see

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2.   Like Willard's examination excerpted in (1), the examination documents can be difficult to follow as the speaker's identity is not always clear. The first statement in (1) is by the examining magistrate, probably John Hathorne. "He offered large talk" is a summary statement by the recorder (the minister Samuel Parris) of Willard's response.

also below). In most cases, these hearings simply involved witnesses affirming or swearing to the testimony that they had provided previously, but, infrequently, new evidence appears to have surfaced during the Grand Jury deliberations, as shown in (2), where Mercy Wardwell attests to Mary Parker's affliction of Timothy Swan and Martha Sprague.

> (2)
> [Hand 1] Mercy. Wardwell: owned to ye grand Inquest: that she had seen: ye shape of. Mary Parker: when she: s^d Wardwell: afflicted: Timo Swan: also: she: s^d she saw: s^d Parkers shape: when she s^d Wardwell afflicted Martha Sprage: but I did not certainly know: that s^d Parker was a witch: this she owned: to y^e to ye grand Inquest: Sept^e 16: 1692   (*RSWH*, no. 662)

Some witnesses were undoubtedly also questioned during the actual trials before the Court of Oyer and Terminer or the Superior Court of Judicature, but we know little about such testimony. Cotton Mather's description of the select cases against alleged Salem witches in his *Wonders of the Invisible World* seems to indicate that such testimony occurred (e.g., Cotton Mather 1693: 72–73), but his narrative is not always clear about whether the testimony given comes from the reading of written depositions or from new testimony presented at the trial. We also find notes to the same effect in some of the trial documents. In an indictment against Rebecca Nurse (*RSWH*, no. 285), an annotation by Stephen Sewall, the clerk of the court, refers to "Seuerall Euidences [given] viva voce which were not written." As the actual trial records from the Court of Oyer and Terminer have not survived – or perhaps never existed (Trask 2009: 54) – we cannot be certain to what extent testimony was given and recorded during the actual trial proceedings.[3]

The main source of witness testimonies – and the data source for this book – are the 457 depositions that have survived from the trials (for this count, which differs slightly from previous published counts, see 2.5). These witness depositions were not produced at a particular stage of the court procedure. Instead, most of them were recorded outside court, in a variety of contexts, and then submitted to the court for possible inclusion as evidence in a trial. This procedure was fully in accordance with legal requirements at the time. In 1650, the Massachusetts Bay Colony instituted a law governing the recording of testimony:

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3.   In his *Wonders of the Invisible World*, Cotton Mather (1693: 76) indicates that "scribes" were present during the trials, taking down the proceedings, but it is unclear whether they were there officially or at Mather's behest to supply him with materials from the trials.

> Whereas experience doth shew the inconuenience of takeinge verball testimonyes in Court by reason of many im*per*tinencyes in theire relations, so that the clarke cannott well make a *per*fit record thereof, & to *pre*uent all mistakes & vngrounded jealousies agaynst the officers, be it hereby enacted & decreed, that henceforth all testimonjes shalbe *pre*sented in writinge to the Court, either attested before a magistrate, or (if the *par*ty be within ten miles of the Court) to be then attested in Court vppon oath […]   (Shurtleff 1854, vol. 3: 211;
> the italics are mine expanding abbreviations in the source)

As indicated in the law, the intention was to remove problems in recording spoken testimony in court, to provide a more accurate record, and to protect the record-ers from "vngrounded jealousies" by letting deponents submit their own written statements (see also Smith 1961: 148).[4] Crucially, the law does not stipulate that a court clerk record the testimony.[5] We find a clear reflection of this system at Salem: the depositions were written by a large number of individuals (see 2.3), and then submitted to the court for admission into evidence. If the evidence was admitted,[6] the deponent would be called to the hearing before the Grand Jury, to the trial, or to both to swear to the testimony after it had been read out aloud in court; the deposition alone would not seem to have been sufficient, as the witness had to be available for further questioning (*Laws and Liberties* 1672: 158–159; Haskins 1960: 199–200). This procedure is referenced in some Salem documents themselves. For example, in (3), Ann Putnam Sr. underscores her alleged affliction at the hands of (the specter of) Rebecca Nurse as her original testimony was being read and she was preparing to swear to her testimony (for other references to the reading of testimony, see, e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 173, 178, 179; cf. also Cotton Mather 1693: 94).

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4.   Smith (1961: 148) suggests that this law may not have pertained to criminal proceedings, but provides no justification.

5.   *The Laws and Liberties* notes that "any one Magistrate or Commissioner Authorized thereunto by the General Court, may take the testimony of any person of fourteen yeares of age or above; of sound understanding and reputation, in any Case, Civill or Criminall […]" (1672: 129). The exact implication of this law is not clear, as it may designate magistrates or commissioners as recorders or simply grant them the right to have testimony taken before them.

6.   It remains unclear exactly who determined what evidence was admitted and how such a determination was made. On the basis of annotations in the court documents, Ray (2015: 80) suggests that Thomas Newton and, subsequently, Anthony Checkley, the attorneys general, "se-lected the evidence, depositions, and witnesses to be used at the grand jury hearings." If so, their procedure and motivations remain obscure, as does their possible collaboration with the justices, with whom they shared concerns and spiritual convictions. Whoever was in charge of such a selection process obviously had a great deal of power in shaping the trials.

(3)
euer sence that time
they haue not had power so to affect me
[Reverse] [Hand 2] untill this .31. May. <u>1692</u> at the same moment that I was hear-
ing my Evidence read by the honoured Magistrates to take my Oath I was again
re-assaulted & tortured by my before mentioned Tormentor Rebekah Nurse

<div align="right">(<i>RSWH</i>, no. 30)</div>

Although variation occurs in the structure, formulation, and labeling of the deposi-
tions, most depositions share a number of core features (see also Doty and Hiltunen
2009: 463). A prototypical example is given in (4).

(4)
[Hand 1] The deposition of Sarah Biber aged 36 years testifieth and sayeth that the
ʌ{saterday} night before ~~Sarah~~ goode Dostin ʌ{of Reding} was examined I saw the
appariton of Sarah goode standing by my bedside, and shee ~~pll~~ pulled aside the
curtain and turned down the sheet and Looked upon my child about 4 years old
and presently upon it the child was stracke into a great fit that my housband and
I could hardly hold it
[Hand 2] Sara biber one har oath did owne this har testimony before the Jurriars
for Inquest: this .28. of June: 1692
[Hand 3] Jurat Sarah Viber
[Hand 4] G. Vibber agsᵗ Goody. Good   (<i>RSWH</i>, no. 334)

Like Sarah Bibber's testimony in (4), most depositions begin with what appears to
be a text label (mostly *deposition* or *testimony*) followed by the name of the deponent
and frequently his or her age. The actual testimony is introduced by the formula
testifieth and saith (or a variation of this formula).[7] The retelling of the deponents'
actions or experiences varies in length from a few lines to more than a hundred
lines (see 2.5). Depositions may also include annotations from the hearing before
the Grand Jury and from the trial, if they were admitted into evidence in one legal
context or the other. Bibber's deposition in (4) was used at both: a recorder different
from the one who took down the main testimony has noted down Bibber's oath
before the Grand Jury, and yet another recorder (the court clerk Stephen Sewall)
appends the "Jurat" ('swears'), which is a clear mark of the use of the document at
trial (Grund et al. 2009: 87).

    The general consistency in the appearance of the depositions indicates that the
recorders, although a diverse group of people, were aware of general conventions for
deposition writing. Their awareness undoubtedly stemmed from familiarity with

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7.   Some depositions use only one of the two verb: *saith* (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 341, 377, 378) or
testifieth (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 385 and 413). See Doty and Hiltunen (2009: 463) for some statistics
based on a subset of the Salem depositions.

court procedure from other legal cases or from legal manuals containing model documents. The Massachusetts Bay Colony court system and its procedures were heavily dependent on practices inherited from the legal framework in England. Legal practitioners in the colony, who often had no formal legal training, relied on the multitude of manuals and guidebooks printed in England and exported to North America (Hoffer 1998: 7). Although it is difficult to pinpoint the exact texts that would have been available to the Salem writers, the fact that similar recommendations for deposition writing occur in a variety of guidebooks suggests that the recorders would have had no difficulty finding general guidance (e.g., Meriton 1685: 456; Brown 1688: 93).[8]

At the same time, the manuals mostly provide only general advice on the formulation, and the Salem depositions as a corpus reveal striking differences from contemporaneous depositions from England. English depositions from criminal courts, to which the Salem depositions are most closely related,[9] are usually more formalized, contain more information about the deponent, and differ in presentation strategies (Grund and Walker 2011: esp. 25–30).[10] It is likely, then, that new forms and conventions had developed in the colonies (possibly partly because of the differing scribal contexts; see 2.3), and that the recorders would have been familiar with these conventions from other legal cases that they had been involved in. As can be gleaned from court documents from the period preceding the Salem trials, many of the actors, who also served as recorders during the witch trial proceedings in 1692–1693, were no strangers to legal proceedings (e.g., Dow 1921, 1975; Hoffer 1996: 45).

For scholars of genre, the label that the users and writers themselves append to a text category is fundamental to understanding how they conceive of the genre and of different texts belonging to a particular category (e.g., Devitt 2004, 2020; Görlach 1992, 2001). Grund and Walker (2011: 16–24) demonstrate that scribes working

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8.   In his *Modest Enquiry into the Nature of Witchcraft*, Hale (1702: 27–28) notes a range of legal sources that he saw the justices consult in the prosecution of cases. These mainly concern authorities on the discovery and handling of witchcraft cases, such as Joseph Glanvill, as well as Cotton Mather. He does list a more general legal source Joseph Keble's *An Assistance to Justices of the Peace* (1683). He notes in particular his chapter on "Conjuration," which will I come back to in 5.3.1.2. None of these sources appears to discuss witness depositions.

9.   Depositions from church courts rely on an even stricter organization where the court narrative consists of a set of answers to specific questions that were outlined in the libel of the case (Grund and Walker 2011: 138–139).

10. For example, where the scribes of English depositions overwhelmingly prefer to report the deponent's testimony in the third person (e.g., *He said*…), the Salem recorders have a penchant for using the first person (*I said*…) (Grund et al. 2009: 67; Grund and Walker 2011: 45).

for the criminal and ecclesiastical courts in Early Modern England used a variety of labels for the witness statements that they recorded and that different labels may point to subgenres within the umbrella category of depositions. Some variation is available in the Salem depositions as well, as demonstrated in Table 2.1.[11]

Table 2.1 Text category labels

Label	N
Deposition	222
Testimony	64
Complaint	4
Certificate	3
Information	2
Evidence	1
No label	161
TOTAL	457

There are clear overlaps with the depositions from England discussed by Grund and Walker (2011). Like their depositions, a fair number of Salem texts remain un-labeled,[12] and the two corpora show overlaps in the labels that do occur: *testimony*, *deposition*, and *information* are found in both.[13] But their frequency and scope of usage appears to differ significantly. *Deposition* is relatively rare in the English material and primarily found in church courts (or the Chancery). *Testimony* is similarly infrequent, while *information* is one of the most common labels (Grund and Walker 2011: 18–20, 22). This again suggests a degree of freedom from the English legal framework or a lack of familiarity with it among the Salem recorders.

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11. *RSWH* applies its own system of labeling to the texts, which only partially follows the actual labeling in the texts themselves. According to Rosenthal and Burns (2009: 95), "'[d]eposition' is used if the document specifically states that it is a 'deposition,' or refers internally to a 'deponent,' and 'Testimony' is used if the document uses the word 'testifieth.' 'Statement' is used in all other cases, but all three had a similar evidentiary status" (Rosenthal and Burns 2009: 95). This scheme is far from systematically carried out, however. For more details, see Grund (2012b: 52, fn. 6).

12. Some of the unlabeled depositions occur in the same physical document as another deposition that is overtly labeled: 19x *deposition* and 3x *testimony*. For the connection between physical document and deposition, see 2.5.

13. As Grund and Walker (2011: 16–24) indicate, it is not always clear that a label is intended to designate a particular text category as opposed to, e.g., the spoken statement. Here, I have taken the *testimony*, *deposition*, etc. in the initial formulation (such as "The deposition of…" or "The Testimony of…") to refer to the text as a category, but caveats apply, as outlined by Grund and Walker (2011).

The choice between *deposition*, *testimony*, and "no label" seems in most cases to carry no functional distinction; instead, it should probably be attributed to scribal preferences (see 2.3). Of the 127 depositions written or co-written by Thomas Putnam when he is the first writer, 114 contain the label *deposition*, while the remaining thirteen have no label.[14] Marshal George Herrick, on the other hand, uses no label in eight depositions and *testimony* in four, and Robert Pike of Salisbury, an Assistant (a leading member of the government of the colony with a magistrate's authority), prefers *deposition* (x9) to "no label" (x7) and *testimony* (x2). In *RSWH*, no. 141, written by Pike, the person providing the statement is referred to as a *deponent*, although the text is labeled a *testimony*. Among the unidentified recorders, who we can presume included a number of citizens of Salem and neighboring towns that did not hold public office or an occupation that required professional writing skills, the usage is mixed: of 149 texts that begin in a handwriting by an unknown recorder, 61 use *deposition*, 36 *testimony*, and 52 "no label" or other rare labels.

While there is little evidence for a distinction between texts labeled in these ways in terms of structure, formulation, and function for most writers, one recorder appears to make a systematic distinction between *deposition* and *testimony*: the Reverend Samuel Parris, the embattled Salem minister during the witch trials, who will feature prominently in later discussions (see esp. 8.3). Only statements by his eleven-year-old niece, Abigail Williams (x8), and thirteen-year-old Ann Putnam Jr., both members of the inner core group of accusers (see Chapter 3), receive the label *testimony*, while thirteen other statements from deponents including himself and other prominent men in the community (such as Nathaniel Ingersoll and Thomas Putnam) are designated as *depositions* (see 8.3).[15] As I have shown elsewhere (Grund 2012b: 44), the distinction in label is also reflected on the structural and linguistic levels as the "testimonies" report on alleged first-hand experiences of witchcraft, while the "depositions" primarily concern secondary observation of others' alleged afflictions. None of Parris's "testimonies" appears to have been used at trial, although some of them were sworn before the Grand Jury. It is possible that Parris viewed these two groups of statements as having different

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14. E.g., *RSWH*, nos. 9–13. Putnam also contributed to additional depositions, but the first part, where the label occurs, was in these cases produced by a different recorder (e.g., RSWH, nos. 171, 458).

15. The witnesses that make direct accusations against an alleged witch of affliction are often referred to as "accusers" in research on the trials. It is useful to recognize, though, that, in legal terms, the official accusers (or "complainants") were those who filed an official complaint (Robinson 1991: 16; e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 39, 96).

kinds of evidentiary status, because of the deponents' difference in gender, age, and standing.[16] But such a distinction is not borne out in depositions written by other recorders.

The less common labels may indicate a degree of overlap between depositions and other text categories or simply unfamiliarity on the part of the recorders or deponents with the genre. As mentioned earlier, *information* is a label that frequently occurs in contemporaneous depositions from England, and its appearance here may simply signal the recorders' awareness of the English legal framework (Grund and Walker 2011: 18–20). The term *evidence*, found only once in "The Evidence of Giles Choree" (*RSWH*, no. 24), may not even be intended as a label of the text. *Certificate* appears as a docket annotation (added on the back of a document so that it could be easily retrieved when it had been folded up and stored). All three depositions (*RSWH*, nos. 315, 746 (1), and 746 (2)) present "evidence" in support of an accused, primarily in the form of a statement regarding the accused person's general character and standing in the community (cf. *OED* s.v. *certificate*). Whether there is a close connection between this label and this kind of testimony is difficult to ascertain, as the label is so infrequent. Supporting (rather than accusatory) evidence also occur under the labels *testimony* and, more rarely, *deposition* (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 293 and 368). More generally, in legal manuals and guidebooks, *certificate* seems mostly to refer to a more formal legal document that is unrelated to the recording of testimony (e.g., Chamberlain 1681: 54–56).

The overlap between different legal genres is especially suggested by the term *complaint*. The formal legal genre of "complaint" records the accusation of a felony against a person (see *OED*, s.v. *complaint*). Such documents are highly formalized based on a set of fixed phrases, as in (5) (see also Grund et al. 2009: 68).

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16. It is not clear exactly what the legal standing of some of the core accusers was during the trials, because of their young age. Ann Putnam Jr. was twelve/thirteen years old at the time of the trials, Abigail Williams was eleven, and Betty Parris, who was involved at the beginning of the accusations but is then absent from the documents, was nine. The fact that they were able to swear to their testimony in court may imply that they had legal standing, although testimony by older witnesses is always present in such legal cases. The presence of two or more witnesses is in keeping with the legal (and biblical) mandate in capital offenses (e.g., Godbeer 1992: 160; Ray 2015: 50). Norton (2002: 335n24) suggests that the fact that the age of many of the younger witnesses is not listed in the depositions signals "a certain disquiet about the age of the little girls […] or even desire to conceal the youth." Dalton's *Country Justice* (1690: 408), which may have been used by the magistrates at Salem (Hoffer 1998: 7; Rosenthal 2009: 18), also suggests that child testimony is admissible. Ray (2015: 70–71), on the other hand, argues that the authorities did not move on the cases until older accusers, such as Elizabeth Hubbard, aged seventeen, joined the group. For a broader discussion of the legal standing of children in the period, see Brewer (2001: 295–316).

(5)
[Hand 1] This. 4th ["4" written over "3"] Aprill. 1692. Cap[t] Jonathan Walcott and Lev[t] Nathaniell Ingerson personally Appeared before us & Exhibited there Comp[lt] in behalfe of theyr Majestyes ffor y[m] selves & Severall of theyr Neighbours against Sarah Cloyes wife of Peter Cloyes of Salem village & [ ] Proctur ∧{y[e] wife of Jn[o] Proctur} of Salem ffor high Suspition of Severall Acts of wichcraft donne or Comitted by y[m] upon y[e] Bodyes of Abigall Williames & John. Indian of y[e] ffamily of m[e] Sam[ll] Parris, & Mary Walcott daughter of one of y[e] Complaynants & Ann. Putnam and Mercy. Lewis of y[e] ffamily of Thomas Putnam whereby great hurt & damage hath bin donn to y[e] Bodyes of s[d] persons & Therefore Craved Justice
(*RSWH*, no. 39)

The four texts labeled *complaint* that are included in Table 2.1 as testimonies (*RSWH*, nos. 128, 163, 164, and 202), however, do not resemble these formal documents in form or purpose. Instead, as illustrated in (6), they provide straightforward testimony.

(6)
[Hand 1] may 17th o̶f̶ In the yeare 92
the Complainte of Sewzanah Shellten saith that Elizabeth Colson Remaynes in Afflicting of the {said} Shellten night & day. And Allso m[es] white also John willard Remaines in Afflic[ng] of hur both day and night also m[e] Inglish and. his wife Remaines afflicting of hure both night and day […]   (*RSWH*, no. 163)

All four documents (two of which are written by the same unidentified recorder) involve the deponent Susannah Shelden, a more peripheral member of the core group of accusers (see 3.3.4 and 8.2), but it is unlikely to be a pattern connected to this particular deponent; rather, it may be a recorder preference. For example, when Thomas Putnam takes down testimony for her, it is always labeled *deposition* or it is unlabeled, in accordance with his general labeling strategy. The use of *complaint* may point to some confusion about the separation of different legal genres or a merging of the purpose of the two genres: after all, by providing evidence against an alleged witch, the deposition is also, at least implicitly, an informal complaint against the person. Alternatively, the label should not be seen as actually designating the text, but used in its more general, non-legal sense of someone uttering a grievance (*OED*, s.v. *complaint*).

Throughout the book, I will primarily use the term *deposition* to refer to the text category, as I have so far. In addition to being a term that is applied to similar testimonies in present-day legal contexts, it obviously enjoyed wide currency in the Massachusetts Bay Colony during the Salem trials. Although diverse in a number of ways, the depositions share a number of extralinguistic characteristics, most importantly the function of presenting the deponents' experiences or actions in relation to a particular case of alleged witchraft. Such extralinguistic features are

often seen as constitutive of the genre a text belongs to (e.g., Biber 1988: 70), though it is not the only determining factor (see Devitt 2020). The flexible boundaries of the genre is further illustrated in 2.3, which deals with the complex scribal situation at Salem, and in subsequent chapters of this book, which highlight the pragmatic linguistic strategies that the deponents and recorders can employ and manipulate within the confines of the genre conventions.

2.3   The Salem recorders

Before *RSWH*, only sporadic attention had been paid to the recorders of the Salem documents.[17] Writers were sometimes identified in connection with particular documents (e.g., Upham 2000 [1867]: 334–335; see Hiltunen and Peikola 2007: 50), but once identified, the recorders usually played no major, systematic analytical role in terms of explaining historical or textual patterns. Most notably, in the previous comprehensive edition of the Salem documents, Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977: 39) declare:

> Most of these documents were not the polished productions of well-educated people, but the groping and at times hardly articulate utterances of peasants more accustomed to the plow than to the pen, taken down by only slightly more literate court scribes nearly overwhelmed by the awesome demands placed upon them by the crisis of 1692.

The evaluative comments about the quality of the language aside, Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977) clearly assume that the documents were the product of "court scribes." *RSWH*, as well as other studies related to that project, has conclusively shown that this assumption is erroneous. Instead, the scribal situation is much more complex, and the identity and role of the recorder is crucial to understanding many aspects of the documents and the sociohistorical context of the trials (e.g., Grund 2007a, 2007b, 2012a, 2012b; Hiltunen and Peikola 2007; Doty 2007; Grund et al. 2009: 69–71). *RSWH* gives partial access to this complex picture: it marks shifts in scribal hands in each document (annotated by "[Hand 1]," "[Hand 2]," etc.), and provides identification of a limited number of especially frequent or central recorders (Rosenthal 2009: 38–41; Grund et al. 2009: 69–71). However, the parameters of the *RSWH* project did not permit a full charting of the recorders, and

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17.   Following the general use in *RSWH* (see, esp., Grund et al. 2009), I use the term "recorder" throughout to refer to the writers of the depositions. Labels such as "clerk," "scribe," "notary," "scrivener," etc., imply levels of professionalization that appear inappropriate for most recorders of depositions. See also Grund (forthcoming).

most writers remain unidentified, and documents written by the same recorder remain unconnected. To remedy this situation, a project is underway to provide as comprehensive a description as possible of the Salem recorders (see Grund, Burns, and Peikola 2014).[18] Until this comprehensive study of the recorders has been completed, little can be said with absolute certainty about the full corpus of depositions. However, leveraging the information that we do have about the recorders (including their identity, their background, and their relationship to the accused, accuser, or the legal process in general) reveals a striking picture of the potential influence of individuals in formulating and framing the evidence provided in the witness depositions at Salem.

As shown in 2.2, the Massachusetts Bay Colony law of 1650 appears to have empowered anyone with the ability to write to take down a deposition and file it with the court for consideration as evidence in a trial or hearing. A mere two years later, in 1652, we get a glimpse of the workings of this system, when the initial law is modified to address some of the practical implications of depositions being recorded independently of the legal system:

> Forasmuch as many testimonies and evidences brought into the seuerall Courts of this jurisdic*c*ion are not only badly written and false English, so that no man cann scarcely reade or make sense of them, but are presented to the Courte in such smale scripts and slurred paper, and so sojled, that is most vnseemely for any person to p*re*sent, or for a Court to receave, to file them vp for evidences, itt is therefore ordered by this Courte and the authoritje thereof, that euery Court, magistrate, and com*m*issioner shall and is heereby impowred to order and regulate the same.
>   (Shurtleff 1854, vol. 4: 85; abbreviations in the original expanded in italics)

Exactly how the authorities would "order and regulate" this procedure is uncertain, and it is abundantly clear from the Salem depositions that the practice put in place by the 1650 law was still going strong some forty years later. The Salem depositions are written by a large number of recorders in a range of handwritings and styles, reflective of the diversity of recorders and their varying backgrounds and experiences with writing depositions. All in all, my corpus of 457 depositions contains some 100 different recorders, about thirty of whom can be identified by name, and about seventy remain as yet unidentified. An overview of the recorders is given in Table 2.2, which shows the most frequent recorders and the extent of their recording (5+ depositions written). The first figure indicates the number of depositions that the recorder is solely responsible for writing, while the figure following the '+' indicates the number of co-written depositions.

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18. The project members include Peter J. Grund and Matti Peikola.

Table 2.2 Salem deposition recorders

Recorder	No. of depositions
Thomas Putnam	118+14
Simon Willard	45+4
Samuel Parris	25+2
Robert Pike	18+1
Stephen Sewall	11+8
John Hathorne	11+3
George Herrick	11+1
Unknown 30	8
Unknown 1	8
Edward Putnam	7
Thomas Flint	4+3
Unknown 5	5+1
Thomas Newton	5
Unknown 16	5
Unknown 23	5
Unknown 24	5
Unknown 34	2+3

As indicated by the table, the contributions by different recorders to the corpus of depositions varies greatly.[19] The fact that some recorders are responsible for a substantial number of depositions has a significant impact on our interpretation of the depositions' textual and linguistic patterns.

Table 2.2 makes clear that depositions that contain contributions by more than one recorder are not infrequent. Most of these co-written depositions contain contributions by two different recorders, but there are rare examples of three recorders (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 85 and 231). The circumstances leading up to such multiple recording are not always easy to reconstruct. At times, requests for clarification after the statement had been submitted for inclusion into evidence or read out aloud at court may have prompted additions. William Stacy's deposition against Bridget Bishop (*RSWH*, no. 231), for example, was primarily written by one un-identified writer,[20] but several interlinear corrections occur in the hand of Simon

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19. I include here only contributions to the main deposition text. Some recorders, such as Simon Willard, who worked for the Grand Jury, and Stephen Sewall, the clerk of the court, add various annotations to a great many documents as they are used at different stages of the legal process. These annotations are not considered in this tabulation.

20. The same writer is responsible for, e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 167. 194, 209.

Willard, which appear to clarify the intent of the deponent.[21] Further additions are found in the handwriting of the famous magistrate John Hathorne (the ancestor of author Nathaniel Hawthorne), who fills in Bishop's first name "Bridget" in three places where the original recorder had left out the name, perhaps because the deponent and/or recorder did not know it.[22] Hathorne has also added what appears to be a brief clarification from the deponent, which may have been triggered by follow-up questions.

More frequently, co-written depositions appear to contain clearly defined sections that were written at different times. In Elizabeth Hubbard's testimony against George Burroughs (*RSWH*, no. 122), Thomas Flint, a prominent Salem Village inhabitant, takes down her initial statement, but Thomas Putnam adds further information based on Hubbard's purported experiences at Burrough's examination hearing. He simply adds the transition "also on the: 9th may 1692…" to proceed fairly seamlessly with Hubbard's additional accusation against Burroughs. Naturally, the different layers of writing and voices in documents of this kind highlight some of the difficulties of interpreting pragmatic linguistic strategies in the documents, which I return to in 2.4.

We find various patterns among the identified as well as unidentified recorders. In general, it is abundantly clear that, contra Boyer and Nissenbaum's (1977: 39) contention, most writers were not "court scribes" or even officially connected with the court, although some must have been recruited to do work for the court because of their known writing ability. Needless to say, we gain most insights into the dynamics of recording testimony from the identified writers. As shown by Grund et al. (2009: 70), these recorders fall into several, overlapping societal groups: (1) members of clergy or people holding clerical offices (e.g., Samuel Cheever, John Hale, Samuel Parris, Edward Payson, the deacon Edward Putnam); (2) people holding legal or community offices (e.g., the selectman Thomas Chandler of Andover, the magistrate John Hathorne, Marshal George Herrick, Attorney General Thomas Newton, Assistant Robert Pike, Constable John Putnam Jr., the court clerk Stephen Sewall, magistrate Thomas Wade); (3) former or current parish or town clerks (e.g., Thomas Bradbury, Andrew Elliot, Thomas Flint, Thomas Putnam); and (4) people who belonged to professions that involved writing proficiency (e.g., the tailor

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21. Surprisingly, this deposition does not appear to have been used during a hearing before the Grand Jury, as shown by the lack of annotation from that hearing. If it had been used there, it would have explained Willard's presence, as he acted as a recorder for many hearings before the Jury.

22. Hathorne missed one instance, however, where a gap in the text remains. For recorders' and court officials' struggles with especially women's first names, see also *RSWH*, nos. 143, 613, and 674; Grund, Burns, and Peikola (2014); Grund (2020a).

Ezekiel Cheever, clothier Simon Willard).[23] While some of these recorders only penned one (usually their own) deposition, others recorded multiple, in Thomas Putnam's case more than a hundred depositions. Based on such patterns, it is reasonable to assume that people who were unable to write or did not know how to formulate a witness deposition requested that these men, who were often very prominent people in their communities and with known writing ability, would record their testimony. Whether these men charged for their scribal services is unclear, and one of the questions that the current scribal project aims to address. No women have so far been identified among these writers (Grund et al. 2009: 70).

The recorders were obviously not indifferent court clerks, but rather men who were heavily invested in their communities and who had close community and even familial connections with the deponents whose testimonies they were recording or with the accused. Thomas Putnam, for example, records twenty-four of his daughter Ann Putnam Jr.'s twenty-eight depositions when she is the lone deponent; Andrew Elliot of Beverly takes down his own statement as well as those by Elizabeth Balch and Thomas Gage, both also inhabitants of Beverly (*RSWH*, nos. 188, 214, 215); and Robert Pike of Salisbury records sworn testimony for fourteen individuals (including himself) from Salisbury or the adjacent Amesbury (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 140, 141, 142).

The patterns of the unidentified recorders and their connections to the deponents are, needless to say, more difficult to pinpoint, but, as with some of the identified recorders, the deponent's place of residence as well as family ties appear to be important (Grund, Burns, and Peikola 2014). One recorder is responsible for taking down five depositions from Ipswich (*RSWH*, nos. 37, 38, 40, 41, 43). In this recorder's case, there is also a connection to the accused in that all depositions present evidence against the same alleged witch: Rachel Clinton of Ipswich. Familial ties may be behind some depositions: a recorder writes eight depositions for Elizabeth Booth of Salem (contained in two physical documents; *RSWH*, nos. 384 and 385), but no other depositions as far as I have been able to ascertain. However, with most recorders unidentified, the connections between the recorder, deponent, and accused remain hidden. This is illustrated by five depositions written by the same recorder for residents in Salem Town, Salem Village, and Newbury, against four different alleged perpetrators of witchcraft: Mary Bradbury, George Burroughs, Susannah Martin, and Alice Parker (*RSWH*, nos. 268, 355, 356, 600, 634).

How to take this complex scribal picture into consideration in an exploration of stance is admittedly far from straightforward. This is especially the case since so many recorders remain anonymous, and the contributions of quite a few of

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23. My information about inhabitants of Salem and neighboring communities here and subsequently relies heavily on Roach's (2009) superb descriptions.

them are very limited. However, an awareness of the complexity of the situation and the overall distribution and characteristics of the recorders as a group helps us do two things. As I argue in more detail in the next section, we can avoid simplistic notions of whose voices and language are reflected in the documents and not attribute stance strategies uncritically to the deponents alone (cf. Grund 2007a; Grund 2012a). We can also begin to outline more systematically how at least the most common writers could influence the presentation and even construction of the testimonies and hence also a large part of the evidence upon which the trial proceedings relied. Throughout the book, I thus explore patterns according to the writer of the deposition, in addition to various other contextual factors. As will become clear, such an approach yields striking results (see especially Chapter 8).

2.4   The voices of the depositions

Texts that purport to represent the spoken language of the past have received increasing attention over the past few decades, especially with the burgeoning scholarly interest in pragmatic and sociohistorical approaches to the history of the English language. However, to what extent such speech-based texts actually faithfully record the original speech remains uncertain, and studies have revealed different approaches and patterns among different writers and text categories (e.g., Jucker 2000; Schneider 2002; Kytö and Walker 2003; Grund 2007a). This is a central issue for a study of the stance strategies revealed in the Salem depositions: can we indeed ever ascertain whether the testimonies attributed to certain deponents actually reflect the evidence they provided in the linguistic form that they used? The Salem depositions provide a mixed picture. While some testimonies are arguably close to or actual reflections of the content and form of the deponents' original statements, other testimonies appear to provide only a partial view of the deponents' evidence and linguistic strategies. Such testimonies instead reveal a mixture of features from the deponents and one or more recorders (often influenced by generic conventions of deposition writing), and some depositions may even primarily reflect scribal patterns. I argue that the depositions are best seen as co-constructed, where the positioning of the evidence and deponent is a collaborative effort by the deponent and recorder. As we shall see, assigning the exact contribution of these actors is not straightforward, and I devote significant attention to this question in subsequent chapters. What emerges clearly, however, is the interaction and connection between particular recorders and (groups of) deponents.

I have suggested elsewhere that the Salem depositions can be divided into two major types, "self-authored" and "recorded," and that these two types afford very different kinds of evidence of linguistic usage (Grund 2012b: 46). Self-authored

depositions simply refer to testimonies that were written down by the deponents themselves, such as Edward Payson's deposition in (7). Recorded depositions, on the other hand, present a deponent's statement as taken down by one or more other recorders, such as William Allen's (and John Hughes's) statement written by Marshal George Herrick in (8).

(7)

[Hand 2] I Edward Paison of ye Town aboves^d thô present at y^e place & time afores^d, yet cannot evidenc in all the particulars mentioned: Thus much is yet in my remem-branc {viz^t} being in y^e aboves^d Pearley's house some considerable time before y^e s^d Goodw. How came in; their afflicted Daughter, upon something that her Mother spake to her with tartnes\<s\>, ~~she~~ presently fell into one of her usu\<a\>ll strange fitts, during which, she made no mention (as I observed) of y^e above s^d How her name, or any thing relating to her. some time after, the s^d How came in, when s^d Girl had recovered her capacity, her fitt being over, s^d How took s^d Girl by y^e hand, asked her whether she had ever done her any hurt,? ye child answ^{e}d no never; with several expressions to y^t purpose which I am not able particularly to recount &c.
Rowley Jun -3- 1692. Edward Paison   (*RSWH*, no. 284)

(8)

[Hand 1] March 5th 1691/2

Wm Allin Saith y^t on ye 1st of March att night he heard a strange noyse not useually heard and so Continued for many times so y^t hee was afrighted and Comeing nearer to it he there saw a strange and unuseall beast lyeing on the Grownd so y^t goeing up to it ye s^d Beast vanished away and in ye s^d place starte up 2 or 3 weemen and flew from mee not after ye manner of other weemen but swiftly uanished away out of our sight which weemen wee took to bee Sarah Good Sarah Osburne and Tittabe ye time was about an hour within night and I John Hughes saith ye same beeing in Company then wth s^d allin as wittness our hands

William Allen
iohn hughes
(*RSWH*, no. 14)

The procedure involved in recording the two types of depositions must have been quite different. In the case of Payson's self-authored deposition, there was de facto no oral version underlying the written document, and some of the difficulties in recording a spoken report would thus not have been in play. We cannot of course completely exclude the possibility that Payson and others who wrote self-authored depositions made notes or outlines before sketching the full deposition, but it seems unlikely that these depositions were copied from previous versions or involved in complex textual transmissions, as some of the recorded testimonies were. Many self-authored depositions arguably, then, give us fairly straightforward evidence of the author's/deponent's linguistic strategies. However, that does not mean that all such depositions are equally transparent. For example, while some of the strategies

used to frame the evidence and presentation of the evidence may be Payson's, it should not of course be taken for granted that he accurately or fully rehearses actions and speech attributed to others in the deposition, such as the exchange between Goodwife How and the Pearly daughter in (7) (see Grund and Walker 2011: 53).

More complex cases of self-authored depositions are represented in multi-deponent statements, such as those written by Samuel Parris. He frequently records testimony by himself and Thomas Putnam and Nathaniel Ingersoll, which outlines their joint observations of others being afflicted (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 20, 52, 57, 109, 176, 361; see also 8.3). Here, one might assume that Parris simply recorded the testimony from his own perspective using his own linguistic strategies, especially since there are textual similarities across depositions, but we cannot ignore the possibility that either or both of the others dictated the statement to him or suggested changes after an initial draft.

Overall, it is not completely clear how common self-authored depositions are. Among depositions by identified recorders, some fifty depositions are self-authored (including statements where the recorder is one of two or more witnesses). Many self-authored depositions may perhaps be found among the statements written by the so-far unidentified recorders (especially among those who are responsible for a single deposition), but such attributions must for now remain uncertain.

The recorded depositions present more challenges than do the self-authored depositions in terms of understanding whose language they reflect. We know little about the exact contexts in which or how the depositions were written down. Whether they were prompted by specific questions or simply "Tell us all about X" is uncertain, although questions are on rare occasions explicitly mentioned in the depositions (e.g., *RSWH*, no. 707). The recorder presumably took down the deponent's oral report in writing as the deponent was delivering it, but it is unclear whether the extant documents are the original written versions or whether previous notes or outlines once existed. Some recorders were fluent in shorthand. Both Samuel Parris and Simon Willard leave annotations, such as (9), attesting to such fluency in examination documents that they recorded during preliminary hearings with alleged witches (see also *RSWH*, nos. 28, 174, 241, 508, 546). "Characters" here refers to shorthand (*OED* s.v. *character* 3c; see Grund 2007a: 125–126; Grund et al. 2009: 66).

> (9)
> This is a true account of the Examination of Dorcas Hoar without wrong to any party according to my original from Characters at the moments thereof
>
> Witness my hand
> Sam: Parris.
> (*RSWH*, no. 102)

Although this kind of revealing note does not occur in the depositions, it is reasonable to assume that some recorders, including Parris and Willard, who also recorded depositions, would have employed such methods to capture the deponents' reports. There would thus have been great potential for recording the statements faithfully, both in terms of content and linguistic form.

At the same time, we can expect only a minority of the writers to have been proficient in shorthand, and, although some of them may have made notes before providing the final product, the shortage and cost of paper probably made extensive notetaking prohibitive for most recorders.[24] Capturing as much as possible with a pen that needed constant reapplication of ink and perhaps even re-sharpening (Thornton 1996: 15) must have presented significant challenges for the recorders, and the recording session presumably thus involved a great deal of clarification and back-and-forth between the recorder and deponent. The informal context of recording the depositions (outside of the court) presumably facilitated such a negotiation.

In their study of depositions from early modern England, Grund and Walker (2011) demonstrate how scribes could have a significant impact on the linguistic form of the depositions, even if the general substance of the message is retained. Scribes could, for example, change the wording to reflect the formulation of questions that the deponents were responding to or they could change constructions to fit conventions of deposition writing, such as changing first-person forms (*I said…*) to third-person forms (*she/the said deponent said…*) (Grund and Walker 2011: 50–55). Although the conventions and contexts of deposition writing as well as the professionalism of the scribes differ considerably between the Massachusetts Bay Colony and England, similar transformations clearly took place in the Salem depositions. Elizabeth Balch's testimony against Sarah Bishop (*RSWH*, no. 188) is an illustrative case, cited in (10).

> (10)
> [Hand 1] The Depotion of Elizabeth Balch of Beuerly Aged aboute eight & thirty years & wife vnto Beniamin Balch ju$^{\varepsilon}$
> This Deponant Testifieth hereby & saith that she being at salem on y^e very Day that Cap^t Georg Curwin was buried & in y^e euening of sd Day Cominge from sd Salem vnto sd Beuerly on horse bac<k> ~~with~~ with her sister then known by y^e name of Abigaile Woodburie [1–2 words illegible] now Abigaile Walden ~~now~~ Liuing in Wenham wife vnto Nathaniell Walden Rideing behinde her & as they were Rideing [1 word illegible] before & were Come soe far as Crane Riuer Common soe Called Edward Bishop & his wife ouertooke vs (on horse back) who are both now in

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24. Many of the Salem depositions are written on small scraps of paper, perhaps trimmed or re-used from other purposes.

prison vnder suspition of witchcraft & had some wor<ds> of Difference it seemed
vnto vs sd Bishop rideing into y^e brook pretty hastily she finding fault with his soe
Doinge & said that he would throw her into ye water or words to that purpose sd
Bishop Answered her that it was noe matter if he Did or words to that effect: &
soe wee Rode along all togethe<r> toward Beuerly & she blamed her husband for
Rideing soe fast & that he would Doe her a mischeife or words to that purpos<e>
& he Answered her that it was noe matter what was Done vnto her or words to that
purpose: And then sd Bishop Directed hi[Lost] [= his] speech vnto vs as we Rode
along & sd that she had ben a bad wife vnto him euer since they were married &
reckoned vp many of her miscarriages towards him […]   (*RSWH*, no. 188)

Some of the legal framing of this deposition is unlikely to come from the deponent
and should instead be attributed to the recorder, Andrew Elliot of Beverly. This
framing would include the initial formula and the speech introduction ("Testifieth
hereby & saith"). In the actual narrative, Elliot changes the deponent's presumed
original first-person narrative (*I being at Salem…with **my** sister…as **we** were riding*)
to a third-person narrative (*she…her…they*). However, this transformation is not
consistent, as half-way through the testimony, the deponent's perspective is again
reflected more directly, through "vs" ('us') and "we." Interestingly, the Salem depo-
sitions frequently retain the first-person narration, where contemporaneous depo-
sitions from England staunchly keep to the third person. Whether word choices or
formulations are those by the recorder or the deponent is virtually impossible to
ascertain. Aspects of the deposition that are more closely related to court procedure
may perhaps be ascribed to the recorder. For example, Elliot may have added a
clarification such as "who are both now in prison vnder suspition of witchcraft" to
clarify who the people mentioned are or to highlight the relevance of the deposition
early on. However, often such questions are the matter of mere speculation.

Additional challenges of course obtain in determining whether the deponent is
accurately reflecting the previous speech events reported in the deposition. Unlike
in many other depositions, the deposition in (10) overtly marks some uncertainty
about whether the formulation is correct in stating that Sarah Bishop and her hus-
band made certain statements *or words to that purpose/effect*. Although this phrase
raises questions about exact formulation, there appears to be a claim that the sub-
stance (or "purpose") reflected by the words is accurate (Grund 2017a: 62–64). As I
discuss in Chapter 4, embedded speech is mostly left out of my study of stance, but
I do discuss the use of embedded speech as a stance strategy in Chapter 7 (see also
Grund and Walker 2011: 38–56, for depositions from contemporaneous England).

Additional copying may have led to the testimony being further removed from
the original wording of the deposition or the deponent's word. In a few cases, mul-
tiple copies of the same deposition survive. Disregarding spelling differences, the

two versions of William Rayment's deposition for Elizabeth Proctor (*RSWH*, nos. 497 and 498) are virtually identical, with the exception of two words not appearing in no. 498. There is no clear indication which version derives from the other. Another example is found in Thomas Greenslit's deposition, which exists in two versions. In this case, one version (*RSWH* no. 635) may be a cleaned-up version of another (*RSWH*, no. 634), which contains numerous emendations (many of them omitted in no. 635).

The relationship between the copies or indeed why several copies were made is not always clear. One possible reason for such duplicates is that one represents the official version submitted to the court and the other is a copy of that version commissioned by a member of the community. Copies of a deposition could be requested, for a fee of "six pence for euery page," as stipulated by a Massachusetts Bay Colony law (Shurtleff 1854, vol. 3: 212). That requests for copies were made at Salem is indicated by a note on an indictment document against Rebecca Nurse (*RSWH*, no. 285). Written by the court clerk Stephen Sewall, who would have been officially in charge of safekeeping the legal documentation in each case, the note suggests that the Nurse family filed a request for and received documents pertaining to Rebecca's case. Although copying could be quite careful as indicated by Rayment's depositions, they could also diverge significantly, as in Greenslit's deposition. In the majority of cases, we only have one extant version, and we cannot determine with confidence whether other versions have existed (see also Grund 2007b; 2012b).

A special case of copying is evident in a substantial number of depositions recorded by Thomas Putnam. Striking similarities in formulation and structure occur across the corpus of Putnam's depositions and especially among groups of depositions that target particular alleged witches. Examples (11)–(13) illustrate this kind of linguistic and organizational affiliation.

> (11)
> [Hand 1] The deposistion of Eliz: Hubburd who testifieth and saith that I was a a considerable time afflected by a woman w^**ch** told me hir name was Redd: and that she came from marblehead: but on the 31 may 1692 being the day of the Examination of willmott Redd then I saw that she was ye very same woman that tould me hir name was Redd: and she did **most greviously afflect and torment** me dureing the time of hir Examination for if she did but look upon me she would strick me down or almost choake me: also on the day of hir Examination I saw willmott Redd or hir Apperance **most dreadfully** afflect and torment mary walcott Abigaill williams ~~Eliz: Booth~~ and Ann putnam and I beleue that willmott Redd is wicth and that she hath often **affleted** me and the affore said parsons by acts of wicthcraft   (*RSWH*, no. 248)

(12)
[Hand 1] The deposistion of Ann putnam who testifieth and saith that I was for a considerable time afflectid by a woman **that** tould me hir name was Redd and that she came from marblehead but on the 31 May 1692 being the day of the Examination of wilmott Redd then I saw that she was the very same woman that tould me hir name was Redd and she did **most greviously torment** me dureing the time of hir Examination for if she did but look on me she would strick me down or almost choak me: also on the day of hir Examination I saw willmott Redd or hir Apperan<c>e **most greviously** afflet and torment mary walcott Eliz: Hubburd: Eliz: Booth and Abigail williams: and I **very** beleue that <?> willmott Redd is a wicth and that she has often **affletid** me and the afforesaid parsons by acts of wichcraft
(*RSWH*, no. 249)

(13)
[Hand 1] The deposistion of mary walcott who testifieth and saith that I was for a considerable time afflectid by a woman **which** tould me hir name was Redd: and that she came from marblehead but on the 31: may 1692 being the day of the Examination of willmott Redd then I saw that she was the very same woman that tould me hir name was Redd: and she did **most dreadfully afflect and torme**<t> me dureing the time of hir Examination. for if she did but look upon me she would strick me down or almost choak me: also on the day of hir Examination I saw willmott Redd: or hir Apperance **most greviously** afflet and torment marcy lewes Eliz: Hubburd ~~Eliz: Booth~~ and Ann putnam and I beleue **in my heart** that willmott Redd is a wicth and that she has often **afflet<e>d and tormented** me & the afforesad parsons by acts of wichcraft.   (*RSWH*, no. 250)

As can be seen from a superficial comparison of these three depositions by Elizabeth Hubbard, Ann Putnam Jr., and Mary Walcott, which were all written by Thomas Putnam, the differences are negligible. Apart from some differences in spelling and punctuation, the depositions exhibit minor variation, mostly in the description of the alleged affliction and the degree of the affliction or torment (marked in bold face). Although the 132 depositions that Putnam writes or contributes writing to do not all show such drastic overlaps, depositions in the same case, especially if they involve the core group of accusers, are strikingly similar. Hiltunen and Peikola (2007: 57–60) devote significant attention to the possible implications of depositions of this kind. As they argue, it is unlikely that individual deponents reported an event in such similar terms, which would lead to the conclusion that Thomas Putnam copied one deposition from the other (Hiltunen and Peikola 2007: 58, 60). Hiltunen and Peikola (2007: 59–60) argue that Putnam was in fact working with a number of formulae or phrases that provide a template within which some variation in wording and structure may occur. Naturally, since Putnam's output is so substantial (writing 118 depositions and contributing to an additional fourteen), these findings raise significant questions not only about Putnam's motives but,

more importantly for our purposes, the extent of his influence on the presentation and linguistic framing of the evidence, key concerns in this study. These questions feature prominently in subsequent chapters of this book, especially in Chapter 8.

Because of the deficiencies inherent in recording, problems in copying, potentially sinister reformulation, or other factors as described above, there was obviously a very real possibility that substantial changes could be made to a deponent's original statement both in terms of content and especially in linguistic form. The question is whether deponents had any opportunity to ensure accuracy and a recourse, if inaccuracies were identified. Presumably, if the deponent could read, he or she would have had the option of asking to see the statement before it was submitted and perhaps to make suggestions for changes, or if not able to read, the deponent might have asked for the deposition to be read back. While we do not appear to have any direct evidence of the former, there is indication that some deponents may have had their testimonies read back to them after recording. For example, a note in Elizabeth Hubbard's deposition against Mary Esty, John Willard, and Mary Whittredge states that "we [two co-deponents, one of whom is the recorder of the deposition, Thomas Putnam] read it [i.e., the deposition] to hir when we came away and she said it was all true" (*RSWH*, no. 197). Hubbard may not have been concerned with formulation, of course, but rather with the substance, as noted earlier, but this kind of note (even if the procedure is not recorded elsewhere) may indicate that check-backs did happen. (The fact that we are dealing with Thomas Putnam may throw some doubt on the reliability of the claim.)

Furthermore, as mentioned in 2.2, each deposition entered into evidence would be read out aloud during the court procedure during which it was used, and, at that time, the deponent would at least in theory have been able to object to major discrepancies. Corrections in some depositions may be a result of deponents finding fault with the recording, although other interpretations of such changes are in most cases difficult to rule out. For example, in John Atkinson's deposition against Susannah Martin (*RSWH*, no 355), the court clerk Stephen Sewall changes the previous recorder's "armpitt" to "wastes" (i.e., 'waists'). This may of course be an indication of a deponent asking for a change, but it may just as likely be a response to a skeptical question ("Was the water really as far up as your armpit?"). Overall, corrections that could plausibly be interpreted as deponents' objections in court are rare.

Although emendations of various kinds occur in the Salem depositions (cf. Grund 2007a), substantial changes to language and content are relatively scarce. Such scarcity would seem to suggest that the deponents were overall satisfied with the recording and endorsed the depositions in the format they were submitted. The implications of such (tacit) endorsements is not always straightforward, however. One might of course question whether all deponents, some of whom belonged to less powerful constituencies (such as women or young adults), would have been

comfortable making changes to their depositions during the court proceedings, especially if the depositions were written by prominent members of the community; such changes would obviously have involved officially questioning the ability or integrity of a particular community member or breaking with said member. At the same time, there is reason to think such clashes were unlikely to occur. We cannot rule out that there were deponents who, for fear of reprisal in some way, would not complain about faulty or fabricated testimony, but it is much more likely that deponents were satisfied with their depositions as long as the substance of their narrative and accusation was conveyed; the actual formulation may have been of less importance. We saw an indication of such an attitude in (10), in the phrase *or words to that purpose* (see also, e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 471, 557, and 745). In examination documents, we often find statements by the recorders that their focus in recording or "copying" was on "substance," as in (14).

> (14)
> I underwritten being appoynted by authority to take the within examination in wryting Doe testify upon oath taken in court, that this is a true coppy of the sub-stance of it, to the best of my knowledge.   (*RSWH*, no. 469)

The recording of the examinations was quite different from that of depositions since it involved taking down "live" speech as it was delivered by multiple people in an oftentimes noisy environment (Grund 2007a: 124–125). However, it points to the general attitude of recorders (some of whom were recording both examination documents and depositions during the Salem trials): the "substance" and not neces-sarily the formulation was the crucial aspect of the legal documents, presumably as the substance would clarify the actionable charge (see also Kytö and Walker 2003: 224; Grund and Walker 2011: 38–56; Moore 2011: 98).[25] As we shall see in the later

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25. The accuracy of Samuel Parris's recording appears to have become a sticking point after the trials. Several members of Parris's congregation stopped attending services during and after the trials (especially the extended Nurse family), and in stating their grievances against Parris as the minister in April 1693, they highlighted as one point "His not rendering to the World so fair (if so true) account of what he wrote on Examination of the afflicted" (Calef 1700: 56). Parris's response was less than forthcoming: "As to my writing, it was put upon me by Authority, and therein I have been very careful to avoid the wronging of any" (Calef 1700: 58). Parris was later forced to backtrack and, grudgingly, admit to possible errors (Ray 2015: 152–153). Although the initial grievance curiously mentions the examination of the "afflicted," it seems likely that the intended documents here are the examinations that record the questioning of the accused (see 2.1); indeed, that seems to be how Parris perceives it, as he points to being called by "Authority" to undertake such writing and pointing to his intention to "avoid wronging of any." The examinations represent a multitude of voices, while the depositions are concerned mostly with one main (if mediated) voice. Parris was officially "appointed by authority" to undertake writing of the former (cf. the formulation in 14, although this document was written by a different recorder), while the writing of the latter was of a less official nature (as we have seen in 2.2 and 2.3).

chapters of this book, many of the markers of stance work to highlight or empha-size various aspects of the testimony and the deponents' accusations. Even if such markers were not reproduced verbatim (that is, the exact formulation used by the deponent) but added by the recorder, they presumably had an effect desired by the deponent: of making the deposition optimal, in terms of its credibility, adherence to legal conventions, or other issues. If not the exact linguistic strategies, then at least the intent of the deposition may have been shared by the recorder and the deponent.

So, what are the implications of this text historical picture for the study at hand? Clearly, witness depositions are complex, often collaborative textual productions. This means that in order to interpret the language in the depositions we must con-sider multiple interrelated factors that could have influenced the patterns we find. Although the many unknowns would seem to make the study hopelessly complex, the complexity is a reality that is inherent in most texts. Granted, the same text his-torical factors may not be in play, but all texts have a certain amount of "baggage" inherited from their circumstances of production and the sociohistorical context in which they were conceived (Grund 2012b). It is relatively rarely, however, that such factors come to the fore in linguistic studies, which of course does not mean that they are not there and influential in terms of some types of linguistics usage. What this study shows, then, is that underpinning textual frequencies across a particular corpus may be intricate sociohistorical and textual realities that prob-lematize and enrich our picture of linguistic choices such as those of stance. I come back to framing some of these complexities within the context of the CoP that I argue developed around the Salem trial proceedings in Chapter 3, and I highlight these recorder complexities as they impact the interpretation of some of the stance features I explore in Chapters 5–8.

2.5   The corpus of Salem witness depositions

The corpus of witness depositions from the Salem witch trials considered in this book consists of 457 witness depositions, totaling ca. 90,000 words (see Appendix).[26] The majority of the depositions are found in individual documents (x304, or 67%).

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26. This corpus excludes the incidental witness testimonies found in examination documents, but does include statements taken down before the Grand Jury (see 2.2). Three documents labeled as "Petition" by *RSWH* (nos. 254, 431, and 495) have been considered depositions, as they provide testimonies in support of an accused rather than a petition (for a discussion, see Peikola 2012: 109). In a few cases where two copies of the same deposition exist (e.g., *RSWH*, 497 and 498, and 634 and 635), only one version has been included in the study. The few depositions that do not survive in original manuscript but have come down to us in a later or possibly mediated form have been omitted. This is the case of *RSWH*, no. 493, which only survives in Cotton Mather's *Wonders of the Invisible World* (1693: 64–65).

The remaining depositions (x153) co-occur with other depositions in the physical documents. In most cases, two depositions occur together, but, in rare examples, up to six depositions may be written on the same piece of paper. This is especially the case of very short depositions taken before the Grand Jury, as in *RSWH*, no. 555 (see 2.3). The length of the depositions varies greatly, from 29 words (*RSWH*, no. 145) to over 1,000 words (e.g., *RSWH*, no. 279).

Table 2.3 gives an overview of some of the characteristics the Salem corpus of witness depositions.

Table 2.3 The corpus of Salem witness depositions

Deponents	Used at Grand Jury or Trial	Neither	N
One woman	157	65	222
Two or more women	7	4	11
One man	90	71	161
Two or more men	31	9	40
Mixed	9	13	22
Unknown	--	1	1
Total	**294**	**163**	**457**

As the table shows, the depositions have various characteristics in terms of their use and whose testimonies they contain. Most of the depositions reflect the testimony of one person, whether a man or a woman (x383), while depositions by several men or women, as well as mixed depositions, are more limited (x73). We can be certain that a majority of the depositions (x294, or 64%) were used officially at some point in the trial proceedings. Following the testimony proper in these depositions is an annotation from the Grand Jury hearing and/or trial ("Jurat in Curia" 'swears in court), as in (15).[27] These annotations signal that the deposition was read during the hearing and/or trial, and the deponent was called on after the reading to swear to the testimony on oath. The legal formulas were added by the recorders officially employed by the court. In the case of (15), these recorders were Andrew Elliot (Hand 2) for the Grand Jury and Stephen Sewall (Hand 3) for the Court of Oyer and Terminer.

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27. Most of the "Jurat" annotations were made by Stephen Sewall, the official clerk of the court, who was in charge of the paperwork produced by the trial proceedings. In a few cases, Sewall uses the English equivalent "Sworn in Court," or some similar formulation (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 266 and 269). While *RSWH* hedges whether this annotation indeed implies use during the trial, there seems to be no reason to doubt that the English phrase had the same legal implications as the Latin one (cf. Grund 2011).

(15)
[Hand 2] Mary Walcutt owned her Deposition aboue written vpon her Oath before & vnto ye Grand inquest on ye 30th Day of June 1692
[Hand 3] Jurat in Curia   (*RSWH*, no. 386)

The fact that a deposition does not have one of these legal annotations does not necessarily mean that it was not presented before the Grand Jury or before the trial jury, but the actual use of such depositions and why they were not annotated remain unclear. A particularly interesting category of depositions in this regard are depositions that endorse rather than accuse an alleged witch. Such depositions would not have been sworn to in court, in accordance with legal practice at the time (Hoffer 1996: 156). As Hoffer (1996: 156) puts it, "[i]n a criminal justice system dependent on the sacredness of oath taking and oath giving, the defendant was at a disadvantage." The evidentiary status of such depositions in the actual trials is uncertain: they do not appear to have been used at trial. For example, in his *Wonders of the Invisible World*, Cotton Mather (1693) never mentions potentially exculpatory evidence being considered at the selected trials he cites, but it may of course be part of a conscious strategy to leave out such evidence or the mention of it, considering his broader goal (Grund 2020a). These endorsing depositions are relatively few (ca. 40), but they are important for understanding strategies of stance, including the positioning of the deponent and the accused (see 8.5).

Electronic files of the 457 Salem depositions were created on the basis of the texts presented in *RSWH*.[28] These electronic files served as the basis for the data extraction and analysis. As discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4, the approach taken in this book is both text-driven and corpus-assisted. That is, I relied both on a wordlist created from the electronic files and a targeted reading of the texts for the identification and analysis of stance in the Salem deposition. The study did not entail searching for a number of predetermined lexical forms, but instead the relevant expressions of stance were identified on the basis of their contextual usage. This was necessary for the focus on the sociopragmatic nature of stance in these documents.

2.6   Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the complex nature of the Salem depositions, by describing the various contexts in which testimony could be delivered, recorded, transmitted, and used. Depositions can be self-authored or recorded, for or against an alleged witch, sworn to and used during the trial process or not, and they may

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28. I am grateful to Julie Perino and Christopher Peace for help in creating these files.

represent the collaborative testimony of several deponents or the statement of just one witness. Admittedly, such variation in factors relating to their production, status, and use makes a study of the linguistic strategies reflected in the depositions challenging. At the same time, as argued in this chapter, the awareness of the effect of these factors brings greater depth and analytical possibilities to a linguistic study. Although the varying characteristics cannot be considered fully and systematically in all contexts, they feature to some degree in virtually all discussions and analyses in subsequent chapters. The role of the recorder is particularly important, and the question of how much influence the recorder had over the linguistic shape of the depositions is revisited many times. In general, this kind of discussion brings to the fore the sometimes neglected fact that the texts that we rely on in our reconstruction of the history of English are intricate social constructions whose nature cannot be taken for granted but must be carefully studied and contextualized. As I explore the parameters of the CoP that I argue formed during the Salem trial proceedings in the next chapter, the social intricacies of the depositions and what they represent come into even sharper relief.

CHAPTER 3

"we thought we did doe well"

The Salem witch trials as a community of practice

3.1 Introduction

After a public outcry against the Salem trials in October 1692, Governor William
Phips closed down the Court of Oyer and Terminer, which was hearing witchcraft
cases.[1] In early 1693, as the members of the newly instituted Superior Court of
Judicature were getting ready to return to handling the cases of the convicted or
accused that were still lingering in prison, Francis Dane Sr., the elderly minister
in the town of Andover, submitted a statement to the authorities denouncing the
persecution of alleged witches; Dane himself had been greatly affected by the accu-
sations as members of his immediate as well as extended family had been targeted
(e.g., Ray 2015: 111). In the statement, he stresses his conviction that the accusa-
tions of witchcraft against inhabitants of Andover, a neighboring community to
Salem Village, were false. He particularly laments the reliance on false confessions
and spectral evidence – the accusation that an alleged witch attacked a victim in
spiritual form (see 1.3):

> I beleeue many Innocent persons haue been accused, & Imprisoned, yᵉ Conceit
> of Spectre Evidence as an infallible mark did too far prevaile with us Hence we So
> easily parted with our neighbours, of honest, & good report, & members in full
> Comunion, hence we So easily parted with our Children, when we knew nothing
> in their liues, nor {any of} our neighbours ∧{to Suspect them} and thus things were
> hurried on; hence Such strange breaches in families, Severall that came before me,
> that Spake with much Sobrietie, professing their innocency, though through the
> Devils Subtilty they were too much urged to Confesse, and we thought we did doe
> well in so doeing, yet they stood their ground professing they knew nothing, never
> Saw yᵉ deuil, never made a covenant with him, & yᵉ like; & Some Children, that
> we haue cause to feare that dread has overcome them to accuse themselues in that
> they knew not. Stephen Johnson Mary Barker yᵉ Daughter of Lieftenant Barker, and
> some others ~~did<?>~~ by what we had from them, with Suitable affections we haue
> cause to beleeue they were in the truth, and {So} held to it, if after many indeauours
> they had ~~been dismissed~~ not been overcome to Say wᵗ they never knew
>
> (*RSWH*, no. 745)

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1. The chapter title quote comes from *RSWH*, no. 745.

Notably, the extract stresses communal culpability: it is the *we/us* that are at fault for believing in "Spectre Evidence," deluded "through the Devils Subtilty." The first person plural pronoun (*we/us*) is a multifaceted pronoun, whose co-reference can vary considerably (Stirling and Huddleston 2002: 1466). Here it may of course apply to Dane alone (the so-called "pluralis majestatis"), although the initial use of *I* and the context seem to militate against this interpretation. More likely, it refers to larger groupings, such as the families of false confessors, the Andover community at large, or perhaps even more broadly all the people complicit in bringing, according to Dane, innocent people to court. Irrespective of how we understand Dane's formulations in this context, his comments bring to the fore the importance of community during the Salem trial proceedings. As the ambiguous referents in Dane's statement would suggest, the concept of community is complicated in the context of the trials. Communities existed on many different levels, from a few individuals to whole towns and even New England as a whole. The importance of all of these kinds of communities – their values and preoccupations – for our understanding of the causes of the trials have been explored extensively (explicitly and more usually implicitly) in previous historical research on Salem (perhaps most obviously and famously by Boyer and Nissenbaum [1974] 1997). Aspects of the community dynamics behind the trials are still underresearched and undertheorized (for "the embeddedness of witchcraft *in* community" more generally in New England, see Demos 1982: 275–312, quote on 309; for witchcraft community in a different geohistorical context, see Petykó 2017).

This chapter explores how the framework of a "Community of Practice" (CoP) can be applied to the New Englanders who organized around the Salem trials to bring alleged witches to justice, and how this concept may enhance our knowledge of the interrelationships and roles among the various participants at the trials (witnesses, accusers, recorders, officials, justices, etc.). This concept, I argue, is crucial for the exploration of stance at Salem and the social moves that marking stance entails. The chapter briefly overviews different kinds of community construction, focusing on research on CoPs (3.2). It then outlines the major parameters of CoPs (including the essential components of "joint enterprise" in 3.3.1, "mutual engagement" in 3.3.2, and "shared repertoire" in 3.3.3; Wenger 1998). I also consider in detail in 3.3.4 the various constituencies and levels of membership of the CoP, which is crucial for understanding some of the functions of stance marking in the Salem depositions. Overall, I demonstrate that, while aspects of its suitability in the case of the Salem trials can be questioned (see 3.3.5), the CoP framework is overall a powerful tool for anchoring the language usage of the Salem depositions – and stance in particular – in pragmatic, situational, and identity-related choices made by the deponents and the recorders of their testimonies. In other words, it helps us drill down into how the "context" (a notoriously slippery concept) affected the dynamics and forms of stance.

3.2   Communities

It is almost a truism to say that to understand the dynamics of language we have to understand the communities in which the language is used, and, conversely, to understand the dynamics of communities we have to understand how those communities use language. A now substantial body of linguistic research on community construction and language has demonstrated this relationship: at the same time as communities shape language for particular uses, language is also centrally involved in shaping the community (e.g., by allowing members to set or elide boundaries between individuals, groups, or other communities). Not surprisingly, then, communities are complex entities, and they can be and have been conceptualized in various ways in linguistic research. It is not my intention here to provide an exhaustive review of this line of scholarship, but to comment briefly on some common notions of community, especially those that have been explored in English historical linguistic research. This brief overview will set the scene for the discussion of the CoP framework and its usefulness for understanding the use of stance markers during the Salem witch trials.

A common notion of community (especially in sociolinguistics) is that of a "speech community," which is used to define a grouping of people that shares particular aspects of language, be it the system of language, language norms, or linguistic variation (Bucholtz 1999: 207; Mendoza-Denton 2011: 181–186). In other words, speech communities, although of course socially anchored, have language as their core defining feature. While work in English historical linguistics rarely appeals to this notion explicitly (perhaps partly because of its emphasis on "speech"), it underpins much of the research on variation and change over time and the compilation of large corpora that are stratified according to periods and genres (e.g., Rissanen 1996: 229). It is especially important for work in variationist historical sociolinguistics that attempts to correlate language use with overarching extralinguistic categories such as gender, region, and social class (e.g., Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 2003).

"Discourse communities," on the other hand, are defined not only by the language the members share, although it is certainly an important component. Though not the first discussion and though criticized and modified in various contexts (see Devitt 2004: 38–39), Swales (1990) is probably the most widely cited outline of the concept. He stresses a number of components as essential for a discourse community, including a set of public goals, means for intercommunication among members to exchange information, particular genres that help the community carry out its goals, and shared lexical resources (Swales 1990: 24–27). This notion has been influential in a number of linguistic fields, especially in the exploration of written texts in applied linguistics and related areas, but does not appear to have found much traction in (variationist) sociolinguistics (perhaps because of its focus

on written text). It has also found some applications in research on the history of English, for example, in work on the construction and dissemination of prescriptive rules of grammar in Early and Late Modern English and discursive practices among eighteenth-century writers (Fitzmaurice 2010a, 2010b; Watts 1995, 1999, 2008). As we shall see, this notion overlaps significantly with that of a CoP, but is also distinct from it.

A more narrow, but related notion is that of "text community." Although it is sometimes invoked implicitly or explicitly (e.g., Stenroos 2008: 445–446), it does not seem to have received much theorization. Meurman-Solin (2012: 467) defines text community as referring "to literate people in a particular place and time who share a particular range of written texts." The significance of this notion is perhaps especially evident for historical linguistic research, where people are joined simply by sharing, circulating, and reading written texts. This is the case, for instance, of members of the medieval and early modern Scottish burgh government discussed by Kopaczyk (2013a, 2013b), who were not involved in producing but in reading the texts produced by clerks and notaries. Indeed, the producers set the parameters for and create the text community and its membership.

Not a particular kind of community per se but a more general component of community dynamics, social networks have been shown to be crucial for understanding language variation and change (Milroy 1987). Concerned with the connections among individuals, social network analysis has demonstrated that strong ("multiplex") connections between members in a community act to conserve language, while more open networks facilitate language change. These modern insights have been exploited in a number of historical studies, with varying success (e.g., Tieken Boon van Ostade 2000 and contributions therein; Bergs 2005). The challenge, as with Salem below, is to be able to reconstruct a social network and its language usage in sufficient detail from the written artifacts that have survived.

While these conceptualizations of community could be employed to understand the nature of language use during the time of the Salem trials, there are ways that they do not fully capture the complexity of the language situation. To refer to the people involved in the trial proceedings as a speech community is accurate on one level, since they presumably shared language conventions and norms more generally as seventeenth-century New Englanders. At the same time, the notion is too broad for the purposes of this study: it does not help us gauge exactly what the members of this community were trying to accomplish with language more narrowly within the context of these particular legal proceedings (cf. Bucholtz 1999: 207–209). Conversely, it would be too constraining to describe the situation in terms of a text community since it would exclude producers of texts (most importantly for this study, the deponents and recorders who co-produced the witness depositions; see 2.3 and 2.4); such a description would focus only on the consumers

of the texts (especially justices and juries), and would thus also ignore the dynamic intersection between these different roles. Similarly, charting the social connections between individuals from a social network perspective would make the scope too fine-grained, and it would leave the importance of some ties and connections unclear as we have access to so little linguistic and extralinguistic data for many of the trial participants (see 3.3.4).[2] As in the case of the concept of a speech community, it also brings attention away from the actual social situation and the social goal of the deponents and recorders.

The community concept that squarely focuses on such goals is that of a CoP (or Community of Practice). Introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991) and elaborated by Wenger (1998) and Wenger et al. (2002), it was first articulated as a theory of learning, explaining how people come together in communities to learn how to accomplish various social tasks. As conceptualized by Wenger (1998), a CoP has three cornerstones: a joint enterprise, mutual engagement among members, and a shared repertoire of practices (including language, behaviors, texts, etc.). A CoP can thus be a number of different groupings: a family, a sports team, or an academic department. This conceptualization mirrors what we find in connection with the Salem trial proceedings (with some important caveats). Although their buy-in varied, the trial participants were involved in bringing alleged witches to justice (a joint enterprise). In doing so, they were engaged with each other in their official, semi-official, or ad-hoc roles as deponents, recorders, justices, constables, jury members, etc., although again the level of (mutual) engagement varied. Finally, the participants drew on, engaged in, and negotiated the community's practices (the shared repertoire), including textual genres, behaviors in court, official duties and actions, and, most importantly, language.

There are clear overlaps here with the parameters of discourse communities, but the CoP framework is in many ways a more flexible framework (see the discussion in Watts 2008; Jucker and Kopaczyk 2013). It broadens the sense of resources or the repertoire available to members to carry out their goals, in addition to genres and lexis or indeed writing more generally (cf. Devitt 2004: 39), and stresses the semiotic interconnectedness of these resources (see 3.3.4). It also stretches beyond "public" goals (as formulated by Swales 1990) to consider various kinds of motivating factors that drive a joint enterprise (see 3.3.1). Indeed, the emphasis on practice and the continuous negotiation of the CoP's goals, repertoire, and member identities highlights the fluid and dynamic nature of communities.

The applicability of CoPs to linguistic research has long been recognized. Shortly after its articulation by Lave and Wenger (1991), Eckert and McConnell-Ginet

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2.   See Diaz-Vera (1999) for an attempt to apply social network analysis to the Salem documents that suffers from this dearth of data.

(1992, 1998, 1999) programmatically outlined the importance of the framework for understanding gender and language. Since then the framework has been exploited in a range of (socio)linguistic studies pointing to the situated use of language for various social purposes (among many others, Bucholz 1999; Eckert 2000; Moore 2006; Clark 2008; Clarke 2009). The framework presents obvious problems for historical linguists, with the well-known problem of "bad data" (Labov 1994: 11). In this case, finding written texts that reflect the linguistic behavior of a group of individuals mutually engaged in a joint enterprise is not straightforward; neither is it straightforward to evaluate the social significance of the language as represented in the texts (about which more in Section 3.3). Nevertheless, the concept is beginning to find some applications in English historical linguistics, and it has recently received focused attention in Kopaczyk and Jucker (2013). Although with varying success, the CoP concept has now been used to explore such varied materials and groups as printing houses and medical books, bilingual communities in Anglo-Saxon England, eighteenth-century periodicals and grammars, and Middle English scribal collaboration (see the various contributions in Kopaczyk and Jucker 2013; see also Watts 2008; Fitzmaurice 2010a; Moore 2019; Smith 2020).

While there is no denying the challenges that exist in studying the language of historical periods through a CoP lens, there are also ways in which the framework gives us new and exciting tools to understand linguistic usage, as the next section shows. It should be emphasized that my approach differs from many earlier applications of the CoP framework to historical English texts. Earlier studies often use a particular text or genre as a focal feature and attempt to reconstruct the CoP that is narrowly concerned with the production (and to some extent reception) of the genre or text. I aim to outline the Salem trial CoP more broadly, but also in more detail, showing how the use of stance features in the Salem depositions is part and parcel of more wide-ranging dynamics of the trial CoP. If I had focused narrowly on the producers and users of the Salem depositions as a CoP, the way in which these producers and users negotiated their roles in a larger community, used the tools and resources of that community, and were influenced by people outside a narrower sphere of actors would have been lost. These factors are key for understanding the sociopragmatics of stance.

3.3   The Salem witch trials and the CoP framework

As the introduction to this chapter suggests, exploring the concept of community during the witch trials is not an easy task. There are many types of community, and they are of course interrelated and overlapping to various, complex degrees. Although the trial proceedings centered on Salem Village and Salem Town, many

other localities were drawn into the witch craze, not least Andover, whose many confessors "became a major problem, indeed, an embarrassment" for the court in August and September of 1692 (Ray 2015: 113; cf. Dane's comments in 3.1). There were various connections and affiliations among the members of these towns, but far from all community members knew each other or knew each other equally well.[3] Some of the magistrates came from Boston, including the chief justice and lieutenant governor William Stoughton, and would not have been anchored in the local communities, although they of course had connections with various members of those communities. What we need is thus a concept that brings together and can explain the behavior (especially the linguistic behavior) of this diverse group of a people. I argue that the CoP provides a useful concept for doing that. At the same time, while the CoP framework provides a new way of conceptualizing the group of people who engaged in various ways in the Salem witch trials, I do not propose that it solves all questions surrounding the trials.[4] In fact, while I attempt to outline the Salem trial CoP more broadly, I do not intend to explore directly what implications it might have for our understanding of the fraught issues of the causes and motivations of the trials. My focus is squarely on how the CoP lens can help us gauge how and why language was used in particular ways in the Salem depositions. The ultimate goal is to see how users made (conscious or unconscious) choices based on context, situation, and communicative need in historical periods: that is, the sociopragmatics of stance. This means that there is room for further development and refinement of how to understand the Salem CoP. Naturally, issues of historical significance can and will arise out of my linguistic investigation, but that is not the main goal of this chapter or the book as a whole.

Even in modern contexts, identifying a CoP has its challenges, and there is some disagreement about how to understand aspects of Wenger's (1998) three constituents in the context of linguistic research. For example, it is unclear how specific a joint enterprise has to be in order to be useful for linguistic studies (Holmes and Meyerhoff 1999: 175), and how much and what type of mutual engagement is required for a CoP to be maintained (Davies 2005: 561). Such problems are to some extent amplified when the framework is transported to a historical setting. To make clear exactly how the framework applies (or does not apply) to the Salem trial community, I discuss Wenger's (1998) three constituents in some detail. This discussion also highlights the challenges of fitting the framework to historical contexts (see, esp., 3.3.5).

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3. This is evident from some of the court documents where first names are sometimes left blank, as the accusers or recorders did not know the person so well as to know his or her first name (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 195, 613, 674; Grund 2020a).

4. To my knowledge, this framework has not been explored before in connection with the trials.

3.3.1 Joint enterprise

Deceptively, the joint enterprise that the members of the Salem trial CoP were en-gaged in would seem to be fairly straightforward: it is arguably the identification, prosecution, and execution of witches.[5] Such a formulation of course presumes that the members were convinced of the existence of witches among them. This was certainly the case for the great majority, as we saw in 1.3, both in terms of the gen-eral belief in witchcraft and in terms of the more specific belief in witches in Salem after Tituba's infamous confession of the signatures she claims to have seen in the Devil's book. Furthermore, once an official complaint had been filed, the accused often seems to have been assumed guilty. Although the concept of "innocent until proven guilty" (a holy principle in modern legal contexts) appears to have been a general tenet of legal thinking at the time as well (Powers 1966: 95), the Salem trial documents often testify to the reverse conviction. It is evident in the many examination documents that record the initial pretrial hearings, where the inter-rogator (usually one of the magistrates John Hathorne or Jonathan Corwin) starts from the assumption of guilt and constructs the interrogation so as to extract a confession (Hiltunen 1996: 23; Archer 2002: 18–20; Doty and Hiltunen 2002: 308). On a very general level, then, the prosecution of alleged or assumed witches would seem to have been the main guiding goal for the CoP, mandated by the legal and religious framework that the authorities drew on. Indeed, removing witches was a religious imperative, dictated by biblical command, and the enterprise of the CoP thus aligned with broader social commitments, steeped in religion (even though religion had different meanings and implications for different New Englanders, who were not all Puritans; see also 3.3.4).

At the same time, even if the prosecution of witches was a fairly uniform goal of the Salem trial CoP, the implementation of this goal was certainly a negotiated one, and one that changed considerably over time (e.g., Calef 1700: 101). Most famously, the reliance on spectral evidence was abandoned with the closing of the Court of Oyer and Terminer (as noted in 3.1; see also 1.3); and while confessing was first a protection against execution, it later became evidence held against the confessors, in accordance with more traditional practice following the biblical pronouncement of "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" in Exodus 22:18 (e.g., Robinson 1991: 223, 238; Rosenthal 1993: 28–30). Indeed, over time, the whole enterprise was over-turned, and the legal proceedings were terminated. This negotiation of the goal of the CoP is very much in line with Wenger's (1998) conceptualization. He stresses

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5.   In Wenger et al. (2002: 30), the concept of "joint enterprise" appears to be replaced by the notion of "domain," which overlaps but also appears to be broader than the joint enterprise (perhaps because this discussion is pitched to a corporate and community organizing audience).

that the joint enterprise is not simply a "stated goal," but one that it is negotiated and "defined by the participants in the very process of pursuing it" (Wenger 1998: 77–78). The CoP was obviously constrained and conditioned by a number of social forces (religious, legal, political), but it is the situated response to these forces that defines the Salem trial CoP (Wenger 1998: 79; see also 3.3.2).

There are ways in which this already complex picture is likely even more complicated. Wenger (1998: 78) notes that for a CoP it is not only the overall goals that matter, but there may be significant personal goals, or, I would add, goals related to various groups within the larger CoP. This was undoubtedly true for the Salem CoP as well: while the trial proceedings had the more or less explicit goal of identifying and prosecuting witches, there may have been a variety of motivations – very general as well as very specific – behind people's participation in the trials. As described in Section 1.3, historians of the trials have suggested that personal grudges, family feuds, competing community priorities, political and religious ambition, gender bias, and the perceived overall war against the Devil and his minions fueled the trials. Indeed, it is probably in all of these factors and individual people's commitment to one or a combination of these "causes" that we should see the still much-debated origins and conduct of the trials (Baker 2015; Ray 2015). But these varying motivations and goals do not detract from understanding the people participating in the trials as a CoP: they still participated in (the negotiation of) the joint enterprise. By helping to accomplish the goal of the CoP, they could reach their own (personal or group-related) goals.

3.3.2 Mutual engagement

According to Wenger (1998: 74), the mutual engagement necessary to carry out and negotiate the joint enterprise of a CoP can take many forms.[6] Personal interaction is a corner stone of CoPs, but members can also interact via other means (telephone, Skype, email, Zoom, etc.). Importantly, just as the joint enterprise does not imply a fixed, but negotiated goal, mutual engagement does not necessarily entail harmony and peacefulness; instead, there can be considerable friction within CoPs, as the members negotiate their roles and identities within them (Wenger 1998: 77). The exact nature and extent of the mutual engagement at Salem is of course not as clearly definable as in modern contexts. In (socio)linguistic research, CoP-based studies are usually ethnographic, with researchers taking part in or observing the CoP: the CoP members can be queried on their connections to each other and their general

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6. In Wenger et al. (2002: 33–37), "mutual engagement" seems to correspond to the notion of "community" (a term perhaps chosen to fit the target audience of corporations better).

commitment to the perceived joint enterprise, or observed as to their behavior towards each other (e.g., Eckert 2000). Such an approach is obviously not available for a study of Salem. To reconstruct the characteristics of the interaction between community members during the Salem trials, we need to rely on inferences and, most importantly, textual evidence, which gives us only indirect, but still convincing glimpses of this engagement.

As for any modern CoP, the extent of the mutual engagement must have differed according to the role of the members in the Salem CoP (see 3.3.4, for more discussion). More centrally involved individuals presumably engaged more actively with each other, partly as a result of their official or semi-official roles during the trial proceedings (such as the core group of accusers, justices, and other court officials). More peripheral members, on the other hand, were less closely involved in the enterprise and may thus have had less opportunity for engagement with others. The type of membership that individuals had could also be fluid over time: while some people may have been central throughout all or a number of the cases, others had central roles only in one or a few of the cases and were otherwise more peripheral members. We can assume that mutual engagement happened among some of the members since, without it, the trials would not have proceeded. By virtue of living in the same community or in closely neighboring towns, many of the participants would also obviously have interacted outside the CoP as part of church communities, families, and circles of friends. Indeed, the networks of relations and friendship ties were extensive and complex, as much historical scholarship has shown (e.g., Boyer and Nissenbaum [1974] 1997; Roach 2009). These communities undoubtedly involved discussions and interactions that had a bearing on the pursuits of the CoP: gossip, for example, seems to have played a major role in extending the accusations of witchcraft outside Salem (e.g., Norton 2002: 113–114). However, this "evidence" of assumed interaction is only indirect in the sense that the mutual engagement did not take place in the actual pursuit of the joint enterprise of the CoP.

Particularly enlightening evidence of mutual engagement that go beyond mere assumption are the "textual sites" where we see – direct or indirect – interaction among members of the community. Most clearly and most straightforwardly, we find it in the examinations (or records of the pretrial hearings).[7] These are often recorded as dialogues between an interrogator (often the magistrate John Hathorne) and the accused, with various interpolations of other witnesses' statements and the recorder's assessment of the courtroom proceedings and his description of the behavior of victims afflicted by witchcraft (Hiltunen 2004: 6–14; Grund et al 2009:

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7.   Lawson's *A Brief and True Narrative* (1692) and Mather's (1693) *Wonders of the Invisible World* also give us insights into such interactions in the pretrial hearings and during the actual trials.

66–67; see 2.2). It is doubtful that these records are completely accurate as to the events in the courtroom or the language used by the participants (Grund 2007a). But they do give us at least a sense of how various participants engaged with each other in negotiating the competing interpretations of individual cases as well as the larger scope of the trials. A short extract from the examination of Rebecca Nurse (in 1) should suffice to illustrate some of this negotiation.

> (1)
> Mr Hathorn. What do you say (speaking to one afflicted) have you seen this Woman hurt you?
> Yes, she beat me this morning
> Abigail. Have you been hurt by this woman?
> Yes
> Ann Putman in a grievous fit cryed out that she hurt her.
> Goody Nurse, here are two An: Putman the child & Abigail Williams complains of your hurting them What do you say to it
> N. I can say before my Eternal father I am innocent, & God will clear my innocency Here is never a one in the Assembly but desiers it, but if you be guilty Pray God discover you.
> Then Hen: Kenny rose up to speak
> Goodm: Kenny what do you say
> Then he entered his complaint & farther said that since this Nurse came into the house we was seiz'd ∧{twise} with an amaz'd condition
> Here are not only these but, here is ye wife of Mr Tho: Putman who accuseth you by credible information & that both of tempting her to iniquity, & of greatly hurting her.
> N. I ~~ha~~ am innocent & clear & have not been able to get out of doors these 8. or.9. dayes.
> Mr Putman, give in what you have to say
> Then Mr Edward Putman gave in his relate
> Is this true Goody Nurse
> I never afflicted no child never in my life
> You see these accuse you, is it true
> No.
> Are you an innocent person relating to this Witchcraft.
> Here Tho. Putmans wife cryed out. Did you not bring the Black man with y<u>ou</u>, did you not bid me tempt God & dye How oft have you eat & drunk y^r own damaon. What do you say to them
> Oh Lord help me, & spread out her hands, & the afflicted were greivously vexed
> Do you not see what a Solemn condition these are in? when your hands are loose the pesons [= persons] are afflicted
> Then Mary Walcot (who often heretofore said she had seen her, but never could say or did say that she either bit or pincht her or hurt her) & also Eliz: Hubbard under the like circumstances both openly accused her of hurting them
> (*RSWH*, no. 28)

In (1), we see the interaction among the accused, the interrogator, and a number of witnesses. The issue is specifically the negotiation of Nurse's innocence or guilt, but also indirectly the whole trial endeavor. In the course of this negotiation, the participants are developing and honing the shared repertoire of behaviors, actions, and language necessary for the success of the joint enterprise (see 3.3.3).

In the textual record of the examination, we get a picture of the actual interaction among members of the community. However, in other cases, the texts in themselves are the engagement, partially or wholly. As I described in 2.4, the witness depositions were co-produced by deponents and recorders (possibly as a result of several rounds of revision and copying). They were submitted to the court, and, if admitted into evidence, the deponents would be called on to swear to the testimony after it had been read aloud at the Grand Jury hearings or the actual trials. Judging by corrections in the records, questions could be asked at this stage, which led to changes and modifications in the depositions, a kind of engagement (Grund 2007b). As we shall see in detail in later chapters, these depositions represent written manifestations of the ways that deponents (through the mediation of the recorder) negotiated their roles in the Salem CoP and contributed to the joint enterprise. Similarly, statements such as that of Francis Dane cited in 3.1 highlight how certain members used textual means to influence and shape the joint enterprise of the CoP. Again, we cannot use these kinds of textual artifacts to gauge the exact amount and kind of mutual engagement among all individual members, as is common in modern studies; and all members were clearly not engaged with each other to the same extent. But without the various contributions of the participants in the trials (deponents, alleged witches, recorders, magistrates, and other court officials) – whether individually or collaboratively, with minimal degree or a high degree of interaction with others – the proceedings (or joint enterprise) could not have moved forward. I return to some of these issues in the discussion of membership in 3.3.4.

3.3.3 Shared repertoire

In the course of pursuing a joint enterprise, a CoP develops a set of practices and tools that helps it carry out its goals smoothly and to mark and negotiate group identity and individual identities. This "shared repertoire" can include "routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts" (Wenger 1998: 83).[8] The form, function, and meaning of the different practices can change over time, and they are negotiated in the course of the mutual

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8. Wenger et al. (2002: 37–40) prefer the term "practice" for the shared repertoire.

engagement of the members. The concept of a shared repertoire has some obvious applications to the Salem trial proceedings, and aspects of the repertoire are of central concern to arguments of this book. Most obviously perhaps, the participants had at their disposal a set of textual forms or genres that allowed them to carry out necessary stages of the trial process. These were inherited from the broader legal system of New England and England, and we see the practical implementation of these forms in the ca. 1,000 documents that have survived from the trials. People with a grievance would file a complaint of witchcraft to initiate a legal case (e.g., *RSWH*, no. 450), and others would record or have recorded their deposition to be submitted against or in support of an alleged witch (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 246 and 254; see Chapter 2). Court officials would empower a constable or marshal to arrest the accused with a warrant (*RSWH*, no. 153), and would call witnesses to court with a summons (e.g., *RSWH*, no. 260). Formal indictments (e.g., *RSWH*, no. 397) would be drawn up in order for the Grand Jury to consider whether to send the case to trial, after a preliminary hearing with the accused (e.g., *RSWH*, no. 6). In other words, the genres constituted "social actions" (Devitt 2020).

In modern contexts, we expect legal documents to be more or less invariable in form and have very set conventions in terms of linguistic usage in order to avoid legal disputes. This was certainly also true for Salem, where some of the more formal documents, such as indictments, complaints, and summonses, reveal little variation (Grund et al. 2009: 68). At the same time, as we might expect from a CoP where the shared repertoire is negotiated over time (Wenger 1998: 84–85), these texts are not completely invariable. Even formal documents such as arrest warrants appear in a number of different, though related, forms. Some document types even exhibit substantial variation. The pretrial hearings (or examinations) are sometimes recorded as dialogues in primarily direct speech, and, at other times, they are chiefly presented in indirect speech or consist of short summaries of the hearings (cf. *RSWH*, nos. 3 and 562; Doty 2007: 27–28; Grund et al. 2009: 68). As outlined in Chapter 2, the Salem depositions show a great range of forms and conventions. This variation in no way seems to have invalidated the documents (cf. Devitt 2020).

This tension between convention and flexibility probably has many sources. While the New England legal system looked to England for legal procedures, practices, and laws, their implementation were in the hands of people who often had little or no formal legal training. In most cases, the justices were guided by practical experience from other cases and the many handbooks that circulated in the period (Hoffer 1998: 7; Trask 2009: 45, 49; Baker 2015: 16); some of these handbooks included model documents that could be copied, or they recommended formulations for specific documents (Grund 2007b: 12–14). Ordinary citizens who recorded or filed depositions could undoubtedly draw on previous experiences with judicial

procedures (cf. Hoffer 1996: 45; also 2.2). The identity and background of the re-corder clearly played a role in the shape of the documents (2.3). What we see, in other words, is an institutional framework and textual templates that influence but do not fully dictate the usage of genres and linguistic conventions; instead they are negotiated and put in practice by the CoP in going about its business (Wenger 1998: 83, 85). The mastery of certain forms may have been important for people to position themselves within the CoP and may have granted authority in the com-munity, even the authority to change the form as necessary.

Beyond the textual artifacts, we can assume that certain practices and behav-iors were adopted and developed over time. We see reflections of these practices in the content of some of the documents and in contemporaneous descriptions of the trials, such as Brattle's letter to an unknown minister dated October 8, 1692 (Burr 1914: 169–190), Deodat Lawson's *Brief and True Narrative* (1692), Cotton Mather's *Wonders of the Invisible World* (1693), Robert Calef's *More Wonders of the Invisible World* (1700), and John Hale's *A Modest Enquiry into the Nature of Witchcraft* (1702; completed in 1697). Again, these procedures were certainly influenced by legal precedent and by traditional handling of witchcraft cases as stipulated by learned disputations and biblical law. But they did not fully adhere to these conventions. For example, while complaints usually required a bond to ensure that the accuser would pursue the case, such bonds do not appear to have been required at the beginning of the trials (Trask 2009: 45); and as we have seen earlier confessions did not receive the normal treatment in initial proceedings before the Court of Oyer and Terminer (see 1.3; 3.3.1). Again, this is a hallmark of a CoP, where institutionalized resources are adapted to the situation at hand, for whatever reason (Wenger 1998: 84–85).

Most importantly for this study, the shared repertoire includes "the discourse by which members create meaningful statements about the world, as well as styles by which they express their forms of membership and their identities as members" (Wenger 1998: 83). Over time, the members of the Salem CoP clearly developed a number of ways of articulating, discussing, and explaining events that were per-ceived to be related to witchcraft. Among other things, this discourse involved particular themes (such as references to signing the Devil's book; e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 290), overall discourse structure (such as reporting dialogues with the specter of an accused or with deceased victims of witchcraft; *RSWH*, nos. 163 and 164), and choices of individual words and phrases (e.g., *afflict*, *I* [*verily*] *believe* [*in my heart*], *apparition/appearance*; *RSWH*, nos. 145, 150, 402). All of these different compo-nents (marked in bold) are illustrated in Mary Walcott's deposition against the Reverend George Burroughs, in (2).

(2)

[Hand 1] The Deposistion of mary walcott agged about 17 years who testifieth and saith that on the later end of April 1692: mr George Burroughs or his **Apperance** came to me whom I formorly well knew: and he did Immediatly most greviously torment me by biting pinching and almost choaking me **urging me to writ in his book**: which I Refusing he did againe most greviously torment me and **tould me if I would but touch his book I sh<o>uld be well. but I tould him I would not for all the world and then he threated to kil me and sai<d> I should neuer witnes againt him**: but he continewed tortoring and tempting me tell the 8 may: and then he tould me he would haue kiled his first wife and child: when his wife was in travill but he had not power. but he keept hir in the ~~seller~~ [Hand 2] {kichin} [Hand 1] tell he gaue hir. hir deaths wound. but he charged me in the name of his God~~s~~ I should not tell of it: but Immediatly there appeared to me mr. Burroughs two first wiues ~~w~~<?> in their winding sheets who<m> I formerly well knew and tould me that mr. Burroughs had murthr<d> them and that their blood did crie for vengance againt him: also on the 9ᵗʰ may being the day of his Examination he did most greviously torment me dureing the time of his Examination for if he did but look on me he would strick me down or allmost choake me: also dureing his Examination I saw mr. George Burroughs or his **Apperanc** most greviously torment mercy lewes Eliz Hubbrt ["t" written over "d"] Abigail william and Ann putnam and **I beleue in my heart** that mr. George Burroughs is a dreadfull wizza<r>d and that he has often **affleted** and tormented me and the affore mentioned parsons by his acts of witch-craf[Lost] [= witchcraft]   (*RSWH*, no. 129)

To be sure, this discourse was influenced by legal and religious precedent and by previous alleged witchcraft incidents in New England (cf. Grund et al. 2009: 83–85; Robinson 1991: 51–52), but, as with the legal genres, the language was adapted to fit the circumstances. Particular recorders and deponents seem to have been instrumental in shaping this language.

This discourse is closely connected with the styles that many CoP members adopted or tried to adopt to "express their forms of membership and their identities as members" (Wenger 1998: 83). Indeed, throughout this book, I argue that such styles are a crucial component of the linguistic usage of stance that we see in many of the witness depositions. Deponents and/or the recorders of the testimonies attempted through various stance choices to signal the importance of the testimony, its significant contribution to the overall joint enterprise, and the place of the deponents as central and authoritative members of the CoP. With the help of these features, the deponents position themselves (or are positioned by the recorder) vis-à-vis their own linguistic usage, and, in particular, other interlocutors and the context in which the usage is made (Du Bois 2007; Jaffe 2009b; see 4.2).

Again, some deponents and recorders seem to have been more committed to the CoP than others and show that commitment through the linguistic usage and other means. The depositions by the core group of accusers consisting of girls and young women, often written down by Thomas Putnam (see 2.4), are particularly striking in this regard, as they contain a number of stance devices that can be interpreted as a bid for authority and centrality, as we shall see in subsequent chapters. These are also the very same individuals whose behavior during the pretrial hearings and the trial proceedings involves falling into convulsive fits, vociferously complaining about attacks from the accused in spectral form, and coughing up needles. The language as reflected in their witness depositions and these "performances" during legal proceedings can be seen as two components of a "semiotic system" (Eckert 2012: 97). In other words, just as the different student groups at Belten High famously studied by Eckert (2000: 59–68) listen to different kinds of music, dress differently, hang out in different places, and use language differently to mark their group identity, in the same way the core group of accusers (and some others) make use of different practices (linguistic and otherwise) to signal their (central) membership in the Salem CoP. They may even demarcate a particular group identity within the larger CoP (3.3.4). In a broader perspective, looking at this group through a CoP lens suggests that what this group was doing was claiming for themselves the kind of central role in the CoP that was denied them in the larger, Puritan community where their age and gender would have precluded them from having a voice and influence (cf. Karlsen 1987; Ray 2015: 44–65). Or, indeed, such a role was claimed for them.

3.3.4 Membership

The complex interrelationships of the actors involved in the Salem witch trial proceedings have been the topic of book-length studies. I will draw on such earlier characterizations to show how the interconnections between different official, semi-official, and ad-hoc categories of individuals can be understood in terms of the CoP framework. My main concern is with these (broad) categories here and not with particular individuals, although some will feature in this discussion and in subsequent chapters as particularly central (officially as well as more behind-the-scenes) for the CoP to be able to carry out its joint enterprise (see especially Chapter 8).

Intuitively, it would seem natural that the kind of membership that individuals have in a CoPs varies: not all individuals will be as interested in a CoP in which they are a member (such an academic department, sports team, work place, etc.), and hence their role, participation, activity, and engagement may vary. Surprisingly, in

his original outline of the CoP framework, Wenger (1998) provides little discussion of the levels of membership. Wenger (1998: 167) notes that there is full participation ("insider"), peripherality, marginality, and full non-participation ("outsider"), but the implications of this division receive relatively little attention. The framework of participation is fleshed out and modified in Wenger et al. (2002), perhaps because they are more concerned with the practical application of the CoP in a corporate context. Figure 1 provides an overview of Wenger et al.'s (2002) conceptualization.
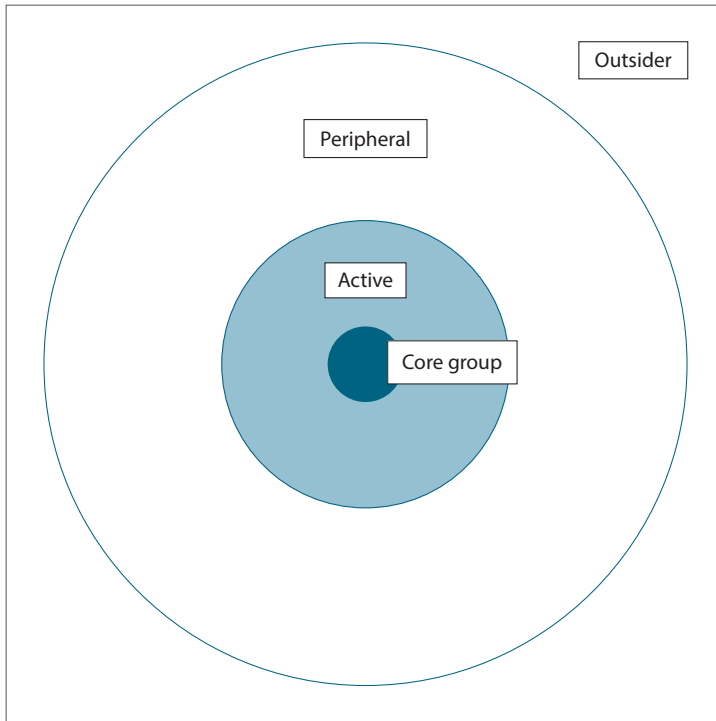
Figure 3.1 Degrees of CoP membership (adapted from Wenger et al. 2002: 57)

In Wenger et al's (2002: 56–57) model, the "Core group" is responsible for moving the joint enterprise forward, sets the agenda, and provides much of the leadership for the group. Among the core group members, they see as central – at least in their corporate and community organizing context – a "coordinator, who organizes events and connects community members" (2002: 55, 80–82). In general, this core group is small, around ten to fifteen percent of the total number of members (Wenger et al. 2002: 56). The "active group" is similarly limited, fifteen to twenty percent of the CoP. This group differs from the core in the "regularity and intensity" of participation, but as indicated by the label are seen as active, full members of the

community (Wenger 2002: 56). "Peripheral" members, on the other hand, do not participate much, but "keep to the sidelines, watching the interaction of core and active members" (Wenger et al. 2002: 56). This does not mean that they are not engaged with the community's business, but may not contribute to it actively. Finally, "outsiders" are not members of the CoP, but still have some interest or stake in the joint enterprise. Reflecting Wenger et al.'s (2002) focus on corporations, they exemplify this category with individuals such as customers or suppliers. Importantly, Wenger et al. (2002: 57–58) stress the fluidity of the membership roles: core and active members may become less engaged temporarily or completely and may thus shift in membership status; similarly, peripheral members may take on more active roles over time perhaps as the focus or interests of the CoP changes.

Applying this model of membership to the Salem CoP is not without challenges. Superficially, it would seem to fit the constitution of the community well, but the membership status of certain (groups of) individuals must have fluctuated considerably depending on the case that was being tried and the stage of the legal process (pretrial hearings, Grand Jury hearings, trial proceedings). For example, some officers of the court must have remained core members throughout, guiding the overall trial process or contributing consistently to the enterprise; some deponents and officials (such as certain constables), on the other hand, may have been core or active members only in one or a few legal cases and would otherwise have been peripheral members or perhaps even outsiders. Since Wenger et al.'s (2002) categories are quite broad, each type of membership obviously spans a continuum of levels of engagement and involvement.

The outsider category is perhaps the easiest to characterize. These would have been the large majority of citizens in Salem Village and the neighboring towns (including Andover, Haverhill, Ipswich, Boxford, Marblehead, Salem Town, Rowley, Topsfield, and even Boston). Arguably, most people in these communities had some interest in the trials, whether or not they considered the way they were conducted legitimate: they undoubtedly knew people who were affected or involved even if they themselves were not actively engaged, and many (if not most) would have believed that the Devil and his minions (including witches) were plotting against the New England communities (see 1.3). These outsiders, who would have been from all walks of life, would not have attended hearings or contributed testimony, and hence not participated in the negotiation of the joint enterprise. Naturally, outsiders could be forced or recruited into more active roles, even if they remained mostly on the outside, but would then be seen as peripheral or active members instead.

Drawing an exact line between outsiders and peripheral members is not easy. Peripheral members would all have had some interest in the trials and would probably have attended hearings. But they would not have submitted testimony or contributed actively in other ways to the articulation or negotiation of the joint enterprise

or the development of its shared repertoire; indeed, to echo Wenger et al.'s (2002: 56) framing cited earlier, they would have been at the sidelines, watching more involved participants carry out the goals of the joint enterprise. Like the outsiders, these members would have been a diverse group, and they may have moved into more active roles at some stage of the trial process or in a particular case and would thus have shifted their membership status.

The line between core and active membership is similarly blurry, and one that several members crossed (or attempted to cross, as I will argue) during the course of the Salem trials. Active members would have contributed in some way to the enterprise, often in the form of testimony in depositions or during hearings, or by being a recorder of testimony. Some court officials undoubtedly belong here as well. Constables and marshals would have been central for the carrying out of the enterprise by arresting the accused, delivering summonses to witnesses, guarding the accused, but they are unlikely to have had leadership roles (with the possible exception of a more senior official such as Sheriff George Corwin).[9] Similarly, some of the known recorders of official documents such as examinations (including the merchant William Murray and Simon Willard, a clothier) were instrumental in contributing to the smooth running of the proceedings (Willard also acting as a (semi-)official recorder for the Grand Jury), but are not known to have had leadership roles or involvement in setting the agenda for the CoP.

The core has some obvious members, and perhaps some less so. Here we should probably place the magistrates involved in the various stages of the proceedings (whether pretrial or trial), including John Hathorne, Jonathan Corwin, Bartholomew Gedney, lieutenant governor William Stoughton, and Wait Winthrop, among others. These magistrates would have been the backbone of the trials and would have established and governed much of the practices and procedures of the trials. Although most of the magistrates were not legally trained formally, they drew on their practical experience as representatives of the law in various contexts and on the many law books and manuals that were in circulation at the time. The crown prosecutor, Thomas Newton, and his successor Anthony Checkley, the attorney general for the Massachusetts Bay Colony, also seem to belong in this category, as they had a significant impact on the conduct of the trials, apparently choosing witnesses, preparing the cases against alleged witches, and presenting the evidence during trial.

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9.   Sheriff Corwin's role and his possible conspiracy with some of the presiding justices with whom he was related have been much debated, and it may be that he was more of a core member. Whether his practices were legal or illegal, Corwin seems to have profited greatly from the seizure of the goods and estate of those convicted of witchcraft (e.g., Rosenthal 1993: 196–201; cf. Calef 1700: 104–105, 108–109).

Unlike the modern, primarily corporate and community organizing context that Wenger et al. (2002) deal with, it is difficult to pinpoint a coordinator that would have had the kind of central role that Wenger et al. (2002: 80) see in a modern CoP. As the chief justice of the Court of Oyer and Terminer and of the subsequent Superior Court of Judicature, Stoughton would probably come closest, and his zeal for the trials is well known and criticized even at the time of the trials (e.g., Governor Phips's letters in Burr 1914: 196–198; Robinson 1991: 192–194; Ray 2015: 76–78). Wenger et al. (2002: 103) also note that "if a community's practice is dynamic, members soon realize they need to continuously gather, assess, and organize materials to keep the practice repository up-to-date and accessible to practitioners." They see the coordinator as taking on such a role in some CoPs, while others have a dedicated "librarian" to carry out such tasks. In the Salem CoP, the clerk of the court, Stephen Sewall, seems to fit this bill. He was in charge of the court's paperwork, and would supply materials to those who requested them.[10] Sewall was the scribal extension of the court, putting the official stamp of approval on depositions by signing *jurat in curia* (or less commonly *sworn* (*in court*)) after the deponent had sworn to the statement during trial.

Some categories of individuals are less easily placed in Wenger et al.'s (2002) model. Members of the Puritan clergy is perhaps the most obvious case. As with other categories above, treating them as a group is misleading. Some were heavily involved in the trials, and had very open, active roles in the legal proceedings. The Reverend Samuel Parris is the prime example here. Parris's role in the trials has been much discussed and debated in the literature. Uncompromising in his approach to his congregation and the Salem residents at large, Parris had seen his position as the minister in Salem Village contested and his salary withheld. He responded with fire-and-brimstone sermons, rife with references to the Devil (Ray 2015: 19–25). In some ways, he laid the "spiritual," interpretive foundations for the later happenings (drawing, of course, on general ideas of the Puritan experiment in New England being assaulted by the Devil's forces). His daughter Betty Parris and Abigail Williams, his niece, were part of the core group of accusers, and, together with other members of Salem Village, Parris submitted many depositions in support of the core accusers' charges (*RSWH*, nos. 8, 20, 109, 360; see 8.2). Most of these depositions he penned himself, and he was the main, court-appointed recorder of examination documents (*RSWH*, nos. 173, 174, 247). Although he was not officially in a leadership position in the legal framework, his influence should not be underestimated, and he should

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10. We have evidence that the family of Rebecca Nurse requested the paperwork related to her case (see 2.4), and Cotton Mather relied on a number of documents supplied by Sewall for his writing of *Wonders of the Invisible World* (Burr 1914: 206)

most likely be seen as part of the core group of the CoP, though perhaps in a more unofficial role (cf. Ray 2015: 145).

The position of other clergy members is less clear. Nicholas Noyes, the assistant minister of the church of Salem Town, was a staunch supporter of the trials, and he attended and participated actively in many of the initial hearings (Rosenthal 1993: 168–169; Ray 2015: 122). This blurring of the line between the spiritual and judicial is of course not unexpected as "life in early New England was fitted to religious imperatives in ways quite extraordinary even by the standards of the premodern world" (Demos 1982: 310). But it is particularly to be expected in the prosecution of witchcraft where much of the judicial thinking was biblical. At the same time, there is variable involvement by spiritual stakeholders. In contrast to his junior colleague, John Higginson Sr., the senior minister in Salem Town, was less involved, and, when he was, he expressed skepticism about the trials (Robinson 1991: 85–86, 203). John Hale, minister of Beverly, and writer of *A Modest Enquiry into the Nature of Witchcraft* (1702), reversed course from being a strong proponent of spectral evidence to being an opponent, though not until the end of and especially after the conclusion of the trials (Robinson 1991: 235–236). Hale also took active part as a deponent in the proceedings in three depositions written by himself, and in questioning an accused in jail (*RSWH*, nos. 189, 410, 557; Hale 1702: 30–31). The Puritan luminaries and Boston ministers, Increase and Cotton Mather, were both believers in the existence of witches and the legitimacy of persecuting them. However, they differed significantly in their views of evidence and the conduct of the trials, even if they tried to downplay those differences: Cotton wrote in defense of spectral evidence in his *Wonders of the Invisible World* (1693), while Increase provided a more nuanced, less dogmatic view in his *Cases of Conscience* (1693). Cotton Mather's opinion clearly changed over time, as he advocated moderation in the use of spectral evidence in a letter to one of the Court of Oyer and Terminer judges and member of Mather's congregation, John Richards, in May 1692 (Schiff 2015:188–191).

Exactly where to place such clergy members in this scheme is not clear. They did not have official, legally-sanctioned roles in the trials (even if some, like Noyes, participated actively); and some kept their distance completely or quietly worked against the court, such as the eminent Boston minister Samuel Willard.[11] At the same time, their views – written and otherwise – clearly carried significant weight with the court and very much influenced the practices and administration of justice

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11. Though published under the authorship of "P. E. and J. A." (the accused Philip English and John Alden), *Some Miscellany Observations on our Present Debates Respecting Witchcrafts* (1692) was recognized at the time as being written by Willard (Norton 2002: 280–282). Willard heavily criticized the methods of the court, in a fictional dialogue between "S" and "B."

(cf. Ray 2015: 71). To place them at the core of the CoP seems misleading, but to leave them out completely owing to their, mostly, lack of active, personal engagement in the trials seems equally problematic.[12] As I have shown, many provided spiritual, learned, and even judicial support for or, more neutrally, advice about the legal proceedings. Perhaps they should be a group of their own, whose membership included some but not all ministers, such as "supporter" or "adviser."

Of central concern to this book are the deponents and recorders of their testimony. In their makeup this is the most diverse and complex group. As noted above, many of them would be classified as active members of the community by virtue of their roles as witnesses and recorders contributing to the joint enterprise of the CoP. Many were both, as a significant number of individuals wrote their own depositions (what I have called "self-authored depositions"; 2.4). Some had official duties in addition to their more ad-hoc roles as witnesses or recorders: several of the constables, for example, wrote down one or more depositions, including Thomas Ruck (e.g., *RSWH*, no. 280) and John Putnam Jr. (e.g., *RSWH*, no. 502), constables in Salem Town and Village, respectively. Some of the recorders and/or witnesses were also among the core group: as noted above, Samuel Parris recorded a number of depositions for his niece, Abigail Williams, as well as for himself and others (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 207, 361). Even a core magistrate, such as John Hathorne took down several testimonies (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 278, 446), though his "comrade-in-arms" Jonathan Corwin appears not to have done so.

As we saw in 2.3, the level of involvement of different recorders varies considerably, as does the involvement of different witnesses. The exact dynamics of this involvement and activity will be a crucial issue for later discussions. But it is important here to explore one particular group of the deponents and their connection to some of the recorders, one in particular: Thomas Putnam. As is obvious from the depositions, the examinations, and the descriptions of some of the trials in contemporaneous accounts (such as those by Cotton Mather 1693, Brattle 1692, and Calef 1700), a limited number of witnesses provided the bulk of the testimony, were the fiercest accusers, and provided most of the "performances" of affliction during the hearings or trials. These witnesses are often referred to as the core group of accusers or "the afflicted" in modern scholarship (as well as in the contemporaneous documents), although historians also vary in how they characterize the group and delimit its membership (e.g., Robinson 1991: 102–130; Rosenthal 1993: 41–42, 45; Hoffer 1997: 47–55; Baker 2015: ch.4, esp. 115). Figure 3.2 provides an overview of this core group.

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12. John Hale would probably be more of an active member, as he attended hearings and submitted several depositions.

Figure with two concentric circles containing:

Outer circle:
Mary Warren
Susannah Shelden
Sarah Churchill
Elizabeth Booth

Inner circle:
Ann Putnam Jr.
Mercy Lewis
Abigail Williams
Elizabeth Parris
Elizabeth Hubbard
Mary Walcott
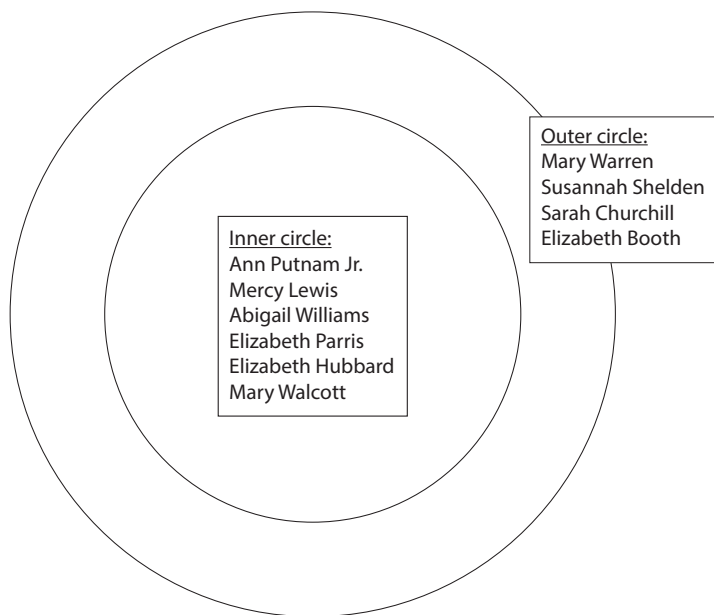
Figure 3.2 Core accusers (adapted from Robinson 1991: 112)

The core group, which in Robinson's (1991: 112) conception has an "inner circle" and an "outer circle," consists of young women and girls. The youngest was nine-year-old Betty Parris, and the oldest twenty-year-old Mary Warren. Although Robinson's (1991) figure provides a neat overview, the picture is more complicated than the figure suggests. Some accusers remained in the core longer than others: Betty Parris disappears from the records fairly early, after being sent away to live in Salem Town owing to what was billed as health issues (Hoffer 1996: 103–104), and Abigail Williams does not feature prominently after May, although she attended trials in June and July (Rosenthal 1993: 41).[13] The case of Mary Warren is particularly complicated: she was originally one of the afflicted, but recanted, was herself accused by the core group, and then returned to the fold of the core group again, to some extent (Rosenthal 1993: 45–48).

The group of afflicted expanded and contracted over time, adding men as well as women, of different ages. Although their motives may have been similar and they may have made the same bids for importance as the core group, they are usually seen as outside of it. Robinson (1991: 112), who sees the core group as part of a larger conspiracy involving several constituencies, phrases it most succinctly: "these [other afflicted individuals] were kept at arm's length by the conspiracy,

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13. Ray (2015: 63–64) suggests that doubt as to Williams's credibility might have been raised.

who relegated them to a few minor and insignificant roles." Indeed, the number of depositions by these other accusers is dwarfed by the number by the core accusers. To what extent these different groupings exhibited different linguistic strategies and hence positioned themselves differently with the help of language is treated in more detail in later chapters, and it is shown that the stance patterns both reinforce and question this division (see especially Chapter 8). But one of the main arguments of this book is that the depositions of some of these core group members contain language that was intended to underscore the centrality and authority of these deponents. In other words, the linguistic strategies of stance that I outline in this book can be seen as a bid for these deponents to be considered part of the core group of the CoP.

Intimately connected with this linguistic fashioning is the role of the recorder in conveying the testimony of these core members. The central figure here is Thomas Putnam. He writes a substantial number of depositions for many of the "inner circle" of the core accusers, and these depositions are often similarly phrased. The breakdown of his contributions is shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Thomas Putnam's depositions for the core group of accusers

Deponent	No. of depositions by Thomas Putnam	No. of depositions by other recorders
Ann Putnam Jr.	25	7 (incl. 4 by Simon Willard)*
Elizabeth Hubbard	20	13 (incl. 8 by Simon Willard)
Mary Walcott	17	9 (incl. 6 by Simon Willard)
Mercy Lewis	10	2 (incl. 1 by Simon Willard)
Abigail Williams	1	9 (all by Samuel Parris)
Betty Parris**	--	--
Mary Warren	4	19 (incl. 13 by Simon Willard)
Sarah Churchill	--	3 (incl. 2 by Simon Willard)
Elizabeth Booth	3	12
Susannah Shelden	3	8

* Simon Willard almost exclusively recorded brief testimony that was given before the Grand Jury, which he seems to have worked for in a (semi-)official capacity (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 480, 555; see also 2.2).
** There are no depositions in Betty's name, perhaps because she was seen as too young to have legal standing.

Of the inner circle, Putnam writes a majority of depositions for his daughter, Ann Putnam Jr., his servant, Mercy Lewis, his sister's step daughter, Mary Walcott, and Elizabeth Hubbard, the relative and servant of Dr. William Grigs, who likely first pronounced the afflictions of the girls to be of a supernatural character. Putnam writes some depositions for other members of the inner and outer group, but for most deponents, the majority is written by other writers (but see 8.2, for Sarah

Bibber). What is significant about these depositions is the similarity in formula-
tion, not only in terms of individuals but across individuals, and across different
cases that those individuals were involved in (as discussed in detail in 2.4). Putnam
also writes (or co-writes) a substantial number of depositions for other deponents,
most notably himself and a number of supporters of the core group of accusers
(Samuel Parris, Edward Putnam, Nathaniel Ingersoll, John Putnam Jr.; see 8.2 and
8.3). However, although there are similarities to the core accuser group's deposi-
tions, there is not the same degree of sameness in these depositions. There are of
course several possibilities here, including fraudulent behavior, mere convenience
of recording, or a collusion among the core group to provide a similar message. The
implications of these patterns become more evident in later chapters, but at this
point it is important to note that whatever his motivation and however much or
little he influenced the actual formulation and linguistic guise of the depositions,
Putnam was a central member of the CoP. His exact role is difficult to pinpoint, but
he is probably best described as an active member with possible core ambition.[14]

The final piece of the membership puzzle is how to conceptualize the accused
and their supporters. Unlike most of the previous categories, the accused would
not have willing members of the CoP; at the same time, they were certainly
part of it, and negotiated their role in it, by attempting to counter the accusations,
to protest their innocence, and throw doubt on the credibility of the accusers or
the nature of their accusations. Many of the accused shared the same beliefs in the
Devil's machinations, but they or their supporters often raised the issue of whether
the Devil could not assume the guise of an accused and hence delude the afflicted
(a sticking point in the use of spectral evidence). Some of course suggested that the
accusers were frauds. The extract from the preliminary hearing of George Jacobs
Sr. in (3) attests to this kind of negotiation, although whether Parris, who recorded
the examination, accurately reflected the actual words used by Jacobs is unclear
(Grund 2007a).

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14. Putnam's scribal contributions are not limited to depositions; his handwriting is found in
more official, court-related contexts, such as Robert Swan's complaint in *RSWH*, no. 450, and
constables' returns on arrest warrants (e.g., *RSWH*, no. 100). Together with William Murray and
Simon Willard (who worked as recorders in several contexts), he received official compensation
from the colonial government in the amount of 5 pounds. This may have been for scribal services,
though the record does not explicitly state so (*RSWH*, no. 866).

(3)
Here are them that accuse you of acts of witchcraft.
Well, let vs hear who are they, & what are they.
Abigail Williams
Jacobs laught
Because I am falsly accused – Your worships all of you do you think this is true?
Nay: what do you think?
I never did it.
Who did it?
Don't ask me.
Why should we not ask you? Sarah Churchwell accuseth you, there she is.
I am as innocent as the child born to night, I have lived .33. yeares here in Salem.
What then?
If you can prove that I am guilty, I will lye under it.
Sarah Churchwell said last night I was afflicted at Deacon Ingersolls, & Mary
Walcot said it was a man with .2. staves, it was my Master.
Pray do not accuse me, I am as clear as your Worships; You must do right judgment
What book did he bring you Sarah?
The same that the other woman brought.
The Devil can go in any shape.
Did he not he appear on the other side of the [Lost]er [= river] & hurt you, did
not you see him.
[Lost]es [= Yes] he did.
[…]
Is it no harm to afflict these?
I never did it.
But how comes it to be in your appearance?
The Devil can take any likeness.
Not without their consent.
Please your worship it is untrue, I never showed the book, I am as silly about these
things, as the child born last night.
That is your saying, you argue you have lived so long, but what then Cain might
live long before he killed Abel, & you might live long before the Devil had so
prevailed on you.
Christ hath suffered .3. times for me.
What three times
He suffered the Crosse & Gall
[…]
Sarah Churchwell, when you wrote in the book you was showed your Masters
name you said.
Yes S^r
If she say so, if you do not know it, what will you say?
But she saw you, or your likeness tempt her to write.
One in my likeness, the Devil may present my likeness.   (*RSWH*, no. 133)

In addition to suggesting that the accusations are false, Jacobs also raises several times the possibility that the Devil took on his "likeness." Indeed, if we believe the accuracy of Parris's recording, in the final two lines cited in (3), the interrogator opens up to this possibility, which Jacobs immediately pounces on (for some speculations about Jacobs's linguistic strategies, see Kahlas-Tarkka and Rissanen 2007: 12–14, 2011: 251–252). This questioning and critical stance found in most examination documents certainly does not militate against the inclusion of the accused within the CoP. As Wenger (1998: 75–77) stresses, CoPs are not necessarily havens of peace and concord; rather, there can be considerable friction among members as the negotiation of the joint enterprise is under way (see also 3.3.2). The accused are thus perhaps best placed as active members of the CoP by virtue of their involvement (however unsuccessfully) in negotiating the joint enterprise in engagement with other members of the community.

Their supporters are even more important for the exploration undertaken in this book. While many of the supporters remained on the sidelines (perhaps in fear of being accused themselves) and hence would be classified as outsiders or peripheral members, others were more actively involved as signers of petitions on behalf of an accused (e.g., *RSWH*, no. 496), or submitted depositions in support of an alleged witch (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 369–373). What we see in some later chapters is that the supporters made use of linguistic strategies of stance that position them as opponents of not only the accusers but of the CoP and hence the trial enterprise as it was being pursued (see especially 8.5). Many of these supporters are thus best seen as active, if resistant, members of the CoP.

3.3.5 Summary and challenges

The previous sections have made clear that it is feasible to construe the individuals who took part in or observed the proceedings of the Salem trials as a CoP, as conceptualized by Wenger (1998) and Wenger et al. (2002). By way of summarizing the components of the Salem CoP, it is useful to compare with the "indicators that a community of practice has formed" in Table 3.2, adapted from Wenger (1998: 125–126; cf. also Włodarczyk 2013: 99).

Table 3.2 Indicators of a CoP

Indicators	Salem CoP	Comment
Sustained mutual relationships (harmonious and conflictual)	Yes	
Shared ways of engaging in doing things together	Yes	

(continued)

Table 3.2 (*continued*)

Indicators	Salem CoP	Comment
Rapid flow of information and propagation of innovation	Yes?	Difficult to assess, esp. in terms of innovation, but the exchange of information seems to have been smooth.
Absence of introductory preambles (conversations and interactions are a natural ongoing process)	Yes?	Difficult to assess without access to direct interaction.
Very quick setup of a problem to be discussed	Yes?	If this is taken to pertain to the process of handling an accusation, including the issuing of an arrest warrant, summonses, submission of depositions, holding a hearing, it appears to be true.
Substantial overlaps in participants' description of who belongs	Yes?	Again, difficult to assess without direct access to such descriptions, but by virtue of the roles that individuals had officially or took on semi-officially, there must have been some agreement of the constitution of the CoP and the role of different members.
Knowing what others know, can do, and can contribute	Yes	Knowledge of who had particular expertise, skills, or information must have been generally known. For instance, men with known writing ability (such as Simon Willard) were called on to undertake writing for the court.
Mutually defining identities	Yes?	Difficult to assess, but the roles individuals took on or claimed must partly have been adopted to react to or complement other roles/identities.
Ability to assess the appropriateness of actions or products	Yes?	Although not all members were presumably equally skilled in this assessment, many must have been well aware of the types of behaviors, language, writing/genres that were appropriate in this legal context.
Specific tools, representations, and other artifacts	Yes	I take these to mean not only physical objects but genres/types of writing as well, but one may perhaps even include other more physical/material things used in the implementation of justice (shackles/chains, gallows, etc.).
Local lore, shared stories, inside jokes, knowing laughter	?	It is possible that the CoP developed such stories and jokes, but it is difficult to assess from the extant documents.
Jargon and short-cuts to communication	Yes	
Certain styles recognized as displaying membership	Yes	
Shared discourse reflecting a certain worldview	Yes	

Some of Wenger's (1998) components are obviously difficult to assess because of the lack of direct access to information about the members, their interactions, or their views of themselves and others. Wenger (1998: 125–126) also does not elaborate exactly what some of the features would entail. All in all, however, the Salem CoP exhibit a number of the characteristics of modern CoPs, especially in members sharing practices, language, goals, expectations, and information.

This does not mean that the framework as conceptualized by Wenger (1998) is a perfect fit in all respects. In addition to some of the features in Table 3.2, the size and temporality may also distinguish the Salem CoP from the types of groupings that Wenger (1998) and Wenger et al. (2002) primarily have in mind. While CoPs can be quite small, Wenger et al. (2002: 25) attest to CoPs with over a thousand members.[15] The Salem CoP would be on the larger side. Although I have not found a total estimate of how many individuals were involved in the trial process, they must have been in the thousands (excluding outsiders). More than 150 people were accused of witchcraft, close to 300 submitted depositions or provided testimony in other ways, and a large number of officials (magistrates, constables, marshals, jailkeepers, jurors, etc.) and recorders took part in the running of the machinery of the trials. Such a large CoP would seem to prohibit mutual engagement and hence indicate a more diffuse structure, but it is again important to remember that all of these individuals would not have been active or involved at the same time; rather, while the core and some of the active members remained the same, there was substantial fluidity of the membership of the Salem CoP depending on individual trials.

Both Wenger (1998) and Wenger et al. (2002) note that CoPs can be both long-lived and short-lived. While Wenger et al. (2002: 25) suggests that even short-lived CoPs last for several years, the length is not a defining factor. Instead, the crucial factor is whether a short-lived CoP "is intense enough to give rise to an indigenous practice and to transform the identities of those involved" (Wenger 1998: 86; cf. Wenger et al. 2002: 25). The Salem CoP is that short-lived but "intense" context. As we have seen above (and as we shall see in later chapters), the CoP developed practices (partly inherited from religious and legal frameworks of seventeenth-century New England) that allowed it to carry out its goal of prosecuting and executing witches. In doing so, it allowed members of the community to develop and "transform" their identities to fit into and respond to the CoP and other members.

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15. Wenger (1998) does not appear to address this question specifically, and it is possible that the comments in Wenger et al. (2002) pertain only to CoPs in a corporate context, which is the main topic of their book.

3.4   Conclusion

When the initial accusations of the practice of witchcraft were lodged in February 1692, individuals in authority in Salem Village and Salem Town (and subsequently other communities) came together to deal with the perceived attacks of the Devil and his confidantes by ferreting out, prosecuting, and executing witches. In doing so, they drew on and adapted legal frameworks and religious teachings to set up a judicial structure to handle the cases of alleged witches, during pretrial as well as trial stages. This structure enabled and required other individuals to join in the exercise of justice: constables and marshals served arrest warrants and summonses and guarded the accused; recorders and witnesses produced testimony to be submitted to the court; jurors were selected to determine the legitimacy of the case; and the accused and accusers were confronted during examinations and trials. Drawing on their experiences of prior legal cases and on precedent from manuals, lawbooks, and legal treatises, the group developed a set of practices, actions, behaviors, and language that allowed the members not only to ensure the smooth execution of their business, but also to carve out an identity within the group that was an alignment with and/or a response to other identities (outside and inside the trial community).

In other words, what we see here are the hallmarks of a CoP, with its joint enterprise, mutual engagement among members, and shared repertoire of practices and procedures. As research on modern communities have shown repeatedly, the existence and the constitution of communities are crucial for our understanding of what people do with language. For the Salem CoP members, language played a central role. Set conventions helped the core group construct the necessary documents appropriately in order to administer justice effectively. But, more importantly for this exploration of this book, I argue that language was at the center of how deponents and the recorders of their testimony positioned the evidence as suitable and essential for the Salem CoP and placed themselves or others within the community. The linguistic means that they employed to do so – strategies of stance – are outlined in the following chapters. It is also clear that, in order to explore the CoP connections of language at Salem, the CoP must be reconstructed broadly rather than narrowly, as tied to the depositions genre only. Only then can we see what the deponents and recorders attempted to do, what they reacted to, and what they tried to influence.

"I verily beleue in my hart that martha Carrier is a most dreadfull wicth"

Methodology and overview of linguistic strategies of stance

4.1 Introduction

One of the cornerstones of any modern criminal trial is the testimony given by witnesses who have participated in, observed, heard, or in some way experienced something that is of relevance to the trial proceedings.[1] At the same time, testimonies are rarely straightforward, streamlined narratives of factual evidence, even if there is often an assumption of factuality and objectivity (Stygall 1994: 138–145; cf. Finegan 2010: 69). The actors (witnesses, prosecutors, defense lawyers, judges) involved in presenting, constructing, and framing testimony employ different linguistic, discoursal, and narrative strategies to introduce the evidence in a way that serves particular legal, situational, or personal purposes. Prosecutors and defense lawyers may, for example, constrain witness narratives by the type of questions they ask (e.g., Harris 2001; Stygall 2012; cf. also Archer 2005), and witnesses can emphasize a certain angle by particular word choices (e.g., Labov 2003).

The Salem witch trials differ in many ways from "normal" modern criminal proceedings, and providing testimony in a written deposition (to be read aloud at court) at Salem was different from the viva voce testifying that takes place in the modern American court room. (Depositions are of course taken in modern legal contexts as well, but they mostly serve different purposes and are recorded in a different context [e.g., *Black's Law Dictionary*, s.v. *deposition*.) Nonetheless, the importance of language in the Salem depositions is no less obvious in the positioning of the evidence and the deponent within the trial. Indeed, whether for or against a particular alleged witch, the deponents (and/or the recorders of their testimonies) signaled in a variety of ways their "personal feelings, attitudes, value judgments, or assessments" (Biber et al. 1999: 966); in other words, their stance towards the information that they provided and hence also towards the accused or others (Du Bois

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1. The chapter title quote comes from *RSWH*, no. 236.

2007). These markers of stance not only reveal the framing of the evidence in terms of relevance, (un)certainty, and (un)reliability, but they also frequently show, I argue, the social positioning of the deponents as members within the Salem CoP (as discussed in Chapter 3). For example, in Elizabeth Hubbard's testimony against Martha Carrier (cited in 1), the gruesomeness of her experiences is stressed with the help of degree modifiers ("most greviously," "such dreadfull tortor as no tongue can express"), and the certainty is emphasized by appealing to direct visual perception ("I saw martha Carrier most greviously torment mary walcott…") and personal conviction ("I verily beleue in my hart that…"). Hubbard's stance towards Martha Carrier can hardly be in doubt, but in taking this stance, Hubbard also positions herself as a central witness: she is a person that has first-hand experience with the accused (the accused even conveniently reveals her name to Hubbard), and she possesses the evidence necessary to convict her, highlighted through the various stance markers. In other words, I argue that she (and or/the recorder) uses stance "in the pursuit of the social capital that accrues to being recognized as having authentic and authoritative knowledge" (Jaffe 2009b: 7).

> (1)
> [Hand 1] The deposistion of Eliz: Hubburd agged about 17 years who testifieth and saith that I haue been a long time afflected by a woman that tould me hir name was Carrier and that she came from Andevovr but on the 31: may 1692 martha Carrier did most greviously tortor me dureing the time of hir Examination for if she did but look upon me she would strick me down or almost choak me and also I saw martha Carrier most greviously torment mary walcott mercy lewes Abigail williams and ann putnam junr with such dreadfull tortor as no tongue can express: that had not the Honr^d Majestrats commanded hir to be fast bound I beleue she would haue quickly kiled sume of us: and I verily beleue in my hart that martha Carrier is a most dreadfull wicth for seuerall times since martha caririe [2nd "r" written over "e"] {~~or hir Apparenc~~} has been in prison she hath ∧{or hir Apperance} com to me and most greviously tortored me by pinching pricking and and almost choaking me to death: which I beleue she could not doe if she ware not a wicth [Hand 2] Elizabeth Hubburd: owned: ye above written evidence: to be ye truth: to ye Jury of inquest: upon: ye oath: she hath taken: July:1: 1692 [Hand 3] Jurat in Curia
> (*RSWH*, no. 236)

The concept of "stance" has received considerable attention over the years under a number of different labels (see 4.2). But despite this attention, there is still debate about how to define and delimit the concept, and, while the conceptualizations certainly overlap, the approaches also differ by linguistic field (e.g., descriptive corpus linguistics, applied linguistics, conversational and discourse analysis, and sociolinguistics). Further challenges apply when trying to transport stance research to historical materials, although an increasing number of historical studies have shown the applicability and rich rewards of exploring stance historically.

This chapter overviews research on stance and the various conceptualizations of it, and points to the benefits of combining approaches from several fields. It addresses the thorny issue of what features to consider in order to capture the ways in which the Salem actors positioned their evidence and themselves within the trial process and the Salem CoP (4.2.1). The chapter also outlines in some detail the process of data retrieval and analysis to stress the different balancing acts involved in studying stance systematically in the complex social situation that was the Salem trial proceedings (4.2.2). Finally, I place the current investigation in the context of descriptions of stance in the history of English and show its contributions to the historical stance puzzle (4.2.3).

4.2   Taking a stance on *stance*

"Stance" in the broad sense of expressions of "personal feelings, attitudes, value judgments, or assessments" (Biber et al. 1999: 966) has been studied from a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives and with numerous partially or wholly overlapping conceptualizations and labels. We find, for instance, descriptive, corpus-linguistic studies (e.g., Biber and Finegan 1988, 1989; Gray and Biber 2015), conversational and discourse-analytical approaches (e.g., Scheibman 2002; Kärkkäinen 2007), as well as sociolinguistic (Ochs 1992; Eckert 2000; Jaffe 2009a) and systemic-functional investigations (e.g., Halliday 1994; Martin 2000). The labels applied are multifarious, though often associated with particular fields, approaches, or research goals: "affect" (Besnier 1990), "appraisal" (Martin and White 2005), "epistemological positioning" (Bednarek 2006), "evaluation" (Hunston and Thompson 2000), "evidentiality" (Chafe 1986), "intensity" (Labov 1984), "metadiscourse" (Hyland 2005), "modality" (Stubbs 1986), "stance" (Biber et al. 1999), "(inter)subjectivity" (Fitzmaurice 2004), "vague language" (Channell 1994), and others. There is some agreement about the general conceptualization of stance irrespective of label and approach, but differences emerge in the scope of the frameworks, in what linguistic features are studied under the umbrella of stance, and in the classification of the pragmatic, textual, social, and interpersonal functions of stance expressions (for overviews, see, e.g., Thompson and Hunston 2000; Hunston 2011: 19–24; Kaltenböck et al. 2020). My study does not align completely with any one framework, but instead draws on different approaches to bring out the stance dynamics in the Salem depositions, especially combining some of the tenets of corpus-linguistic approaches with concerns from sociolinguistic and discourse-analytical framings. I situate my methodological decisions in current conversations in the field in the sections that follow. This is not intended to be an exhaustive description of all the various approaches and concerns in this sprawling research area, but rather a broad backdrop for the methods and choices that govern this study.

4.2.1 Scope and stance features

One of the thorniest questions about studying stance is delimiting the concept or rather determining what features carry out stance functions. Much research has been devoted to what might be termed the "grammar of stance" (Thompson and Hunston 2000: 18–19), that is, the lexico-grammatical resources that signal different aspects of stance. Key in such studies is that stance features "overtly express an attitude or assessment relative to some proposition in the immediate discourse" (Gray and Biber 2015: 220–221). In this framework, *suggest* in "I suggest that you go through your notes before tomorrow," where *suggest* "governs" the proposition *that you go through*…, would be seen as signaling grammatical stance. *Important* in "This group occupies important economic positions…," on the other hand, would be left out since it does not have scope over a proposition; at the same time, it is often acknowledged as a stance feature but of a different kind (Gray and Biber 2015: 221; see also Hyland 2005: 31, for a similar discussion about the related concept of "metadiscourse"). This focus on the "grammar of stance" facilitates a corpus-based approach, as there is a relatively limited number of possible stance features and structures, which can be pursued through lexical searches (e.g., Biber 2004; Gray, Biber, and Hiltunen 2011; Gray and Biber 2015: 247–248).

This approach of course constrains stance to a particular kind of expression and construes stance as a grammatical system. In other words, such studies "are interested in markers or expressions of stance rather than stance as a more abstract concept in itself" (Hunston 2011: 22). Broader construals of stance are found under the umbrellas of "evaluation" and "appraisal," as well as in sociolinguistic and discourse-analytical studies. Although these frameworks differ in some of the specifics, they agree in seeing stance as created in context and being dependent on textual and socio-situational negotiation and collaboration between interlocutors. Indeed, pretty much any feature can be marshaled into stance service in this view. Hunston (2007: 41–42), for example, demonstrates on the basis of corpus evidence that the prepositional phrase *to the point of*, which carries no overt stance value, is a marker of negative evaluation in many contexts. Within the appraisal framework (Martin and White 2005), which is based in systemic functional linguistics, the focus is on the types of evaluative meanings expressed in texts, and these meanings can be realized by any feature in a sentence/utterance or a whole sentence or utterance in itself, even if no overtly evaluative marker is present (e.g., Martin and White 2005: 8–12; cf. Hyland 2005: 27–31). In other words, stance is a set of meanings or a more "abstract concept," to echo the quote from Hunston (2011) at the beginning of this paragraph.

This conceptualization of stance as a function (or meaning) rather than a clearly delimited set of resources is particularly clear in discourse-analytical and

sociolinguistic work. Looking at the specifics of two different framings, from Du Bois (2007) and Jaffe (2009b), is instructive in this regard:

> Stance is a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field. (Du Bois 2007: 163)

> [Studies of stance] are concerned with *positionality*: how speakers and writers are necessarily engaged in positioning themselves vis-à-vis their words and texts (which are embedded in histories of linguistic and textual production), their interlocutors and audiences (both actual and virtual/projected/imagined), and with respect to a context that they simultaneously respond to and construct linguistically. (Jaffe 2009b: 4)

For both, the evaluation of the content or form of a statement (or what Du Bois [2007: 163] calls the "stance object") is only one part of stance. An equally important component is the social action that stancetaking is seen to perform or entail: by taking up a stance a person may align or disalign with stances taken by others; or they may align or disalign with other aspects of the social context (or what Du Bois [2007] refers to as the "sociocultural field"; cf. Martin and White 2005: 1). Stance is thus seen as instrumental for the social positioning of speakers, as emphasized in Jaffe's (2009b) definition, and for the construction of their identities in interaction with others. For example, it has been shown repeatedly that speakers make use of sociolinguistically salient variation to signal their position vis-à-vis a stance object and other speakers, such as the high schoolers in Detroit adopting certain variable vowel pronunciations in order to signal their stance toward other high schoolers and other aspects of social life in late-twentieth-century Detroit in Eckert's (2000) famous study. It is clear from research within this vein that the resources available to accomplish stance are virtually limitless. Jaffe (2009: 3) even suggests that "there is no such thing as a completely neutral position vis-à-vis one's linguistic productions, because neutrality is itself a stance" (for a different view, see Palmer 1986: 29, 86–87).

The challenges and potentials of the various conceptualizations and operationalizations of stance should be obvious. If one adopts a "grammar of stance" approach, there are clear parameters of what should be included, but also clear limitations, as grammatical features tied to propositions are only a constrained slice of the resources available to express stance. Furthermore, in the Salem depositions, many of the grammatical features listed in explorations of grammatical stance, even in contemporaneous materials, such as Gray, Biber, and Hiltunen (2011: 255–257), are non-existent or very rare, including adverbs such as *certainly* or *certain + that* clauses. This is of course in itself a finding in terms of how the grammar of stance is deployed in these documents, but focusing on such features alone would give a

limited and artificial view of stance and stance resources in the Salem depositions. At the same time, the broader, potentially limitless stance on stance is equally challenging, though of course in a different way (e.g., Hunston 2004, 2011): how does one give a sense of stance features and moves at Salem if everything can be and is stance? Where would a study begin and end? Is there really any point to exploring stance at all if everything is – or at least potentially could be – stance?

Since I have written this book, I have obviously decided that there is a purpose to studying stance in the Salem depositions (even if everything can be stance). One of the driving factors is that, even if we admit everything as stance, there is variation in the stance resources used and the stance expressed in the depositions. This variation reflects different stance moves by various actors in the Salem CoP, as they position themselves, their evidence, and their relationship to others (to echo Du Bois's [2007: 163] "stance triangle"). This social framing of stance, which is crucial for understanding what the Salem witnesses and recorders of their testimony were trying to accomplish with their linguistic usage, makes it important to go beyond the "grammar of stance." While some stance features in the Salem depositions are certainly tied to propositions (see especially Chapter 7), other features, which are both qualitatively and quantitatively significant, are not (see Chapters 5, 6, and 8). At the same time, my intention is not to provide a comprehensive catalogue of every stance and every stance marker in the 457 depositions included in this study (cf. Hunston's [2004] aptly titled article "Counting the Uncountable"). Rather, in the first instance, as focal or organizational points for my exploration, I use three broad interconnected functional contexts where stance markers are particularly frequent and where variation is evident: 1) the deponents' evaluation of their experiences and of actors in the trials (especially the accused and the accusers) in Chapter 5; 2) the deponents' boosting or downplaying of their experiences (in terms of degree modifiers) in Chapter 6; and 3) the deponents' indication of the source of knowledge or information to back up claims and statements in Chapter 7. In Chapter 8, I bring these three functional contexts together to see how they interact to create a stance profile for groups of depositions and deponents (and/or the recorders of their testimonies). In this context, I also consider less frequent stance features that are not numerically persistent, but nonetheless locally important in particular texts, in particular deposition types, or for particular deponents, especially as part of the larger stance profile.

The study thus tries to walk a line between giving a systematic (though not comprehensive) account of the type of stance and stance markers employed in the Salem depositions and at the same time putting the emphasis on the broader patterns of stance across depositions in terms of their contexts and functions. The focus on the three functional contexts arises out of the data retrieval and analysis described further in 4.2.2. It is of course not surprising that stance features and stancetaking

would be common and show variation in these contexts considering the nature of the genre, its purpose in the legal system, and, as I argue, its importance for the actors in the trial CoP. They are contexts and aspects of the depositions that are central for what the depositions represent and perform: the actors and the experiences are central topics in a witch trial (as in pretty much any legal proceeding), and emphasizing, intensifying, or even downplaying the experiences is an extension of those topics. Indicating how deponents came to know what they report is of course also a pivotal aspect of how to evaluate the evidence as evidence. We thus get a view of how the deponents and recorders of their testimony utilized stance features for the communicative and social purposes that were central for them in the context of this genre and this type of CoP.

4.2.2 Discovering stance

My operationalization of and approach to stance was based on a preliminary reading of the texts, assisted by a wordlist of the 457 witness depositions that was created with the help of WordSmith 6 (for more information on the corpus, see 2.5). As I have already hinted, this approach revealed that, adopting a "grammar of stance" perspective would be too limiting, and it indicated that adopting a corpus-based approach that was reliant on automatic retrieval of relevant examples alone was unworkable.[2] At the same time, it was important for me that the study capture major classes of stance markers consistently. In the study of stance and the markers of stance, I therefore adopted both a corpus-assisted and a text-driven approach (cf. Rühlemann and Aijmer's [2015: 3–9] concepts of "horizontal" and "vertical" reading in corpus pragmatics). It was corpus-assisted in that I used the WordSmith-generated wordlist to sift out potentially stance-related features (which also helped negotiating the substantial spelling variation evident in the documents; see Grund et al. 2009: 72–77; Grund 2012b: 52 n. 15). This of course only yielded potential features and mostly features that were overtly related to assessment, attitude, value judgments, etc. (cf. Martin's [2000: 154–155] notion of "inscribed" and "evoked" appraisal). Such features included verbs such as THINK, KNOW, and *must*, adverbs such as *grievously* and *greatly*, and adjectives such as *diligent* and *sorrowful*, among many others. All of the instances that surfaced in this word-list-initiated procedure were then checked in context in WordSmith-generated concordances and in the full text to ascertain their stance value (representing Rühlemann and Aijmer's [2015: 7–8] vertical reading).

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2.   Corpus-based studies also often indicate that substantial post-processing is required for accuracy even with fairly straightforward lexical searches (e.g., Millar and Hunston 2015).

The "text-driven" side of the approach is taken from Bednarek (2006; also Rühlemann and Aijmer's [2015: 3] horizontal reading). She sees this as parallel to a "corpus-driven" approach, but it is based on the close and manual inspection of a set of texts or small-scale corpus. My text-driven approach to the Salem depositions was guided by functional questions: what stances are signaled in the text and what markers express those stances? That is, how do the depositions convey "personal feelings, attitudes, value judgments, or assessments" (Biber et al. 1999: 966) or the social positioning (Jaffe 2009b) of the deponents? This procedure is related to the approach of function-to-form mapping in historical pragmatics (Jacobs and Jucker 1995: 13, 19), that is, looking for forms that instantiate a particular function. "Interrogating" the texts in this way was clearly a necessary and integral part of the study, and revealed examples that would not have been included on the basis of the wordlist alone (for a different approach to function-to-form mapping, corpora, and stance, see Landert 2019). I discuss many of these examples in the following chapters, but two suffice for illustration, given in (2) and (3).

> (2)
> I verily beleue **in my heart** that Mr. Geooge Burroughs is a dreadfull wizzard and that he has seuerall times tormented me and the affore said parsons by his acts of wicthcr<a>[Lost] [= witchcraft]   (*RSWH*, no. 458)
>
> (3)
> I **saw** the Apperishtion of Giles Cory com and afflect me   (*RSWH*, no. 593)

Believe ("beleue") in (2) is of course a straightforward stance marker, as it expresses an assessment or value judgment, and it was singled out in the wordlist, as was *verily*, as an emphatic marker stressing the deponent's assessment of how deeply felt the belief is. *Heart* (let alone *in my heart*, which is obviously not represented directly in a wordlist), on the other hand, did not surface in the wordlist approach, as it is not overtly and directly stance-related. However, in this context, it arguably has an important stance function. Partly it performs the same or a complementary role to *verily*, stressing the sincerity of the belief. But it also, as I argue more fully in 6.2.3.8, echoes biblical formulations and thus aligns the deponent with large parts of the Salem community for whom religious convictions were a part of the fabric of the community and important for the interpretation and contextualization of witchcraft.

The example of *saw* in (3) is slightly different. Most straightforwardly, SEE indicates visual perception and can function as a marker of evidentiality, or source of information (see Chapter 7); it does so in (3), where it signals that the deponent had a visual experience of Giles Cory. Superficially, then, it would seem not to be a stance marker (for the debate of the nature of evidentiality as an epistemic stance category, see 7.2). Contextually, on the other hand, it clearly is a stance marker. Citing

visual experience as the source of information arguably has "epistemic extensions" (Aikhenvald 2004: 6–7) where SEE stresses that the deponent has no doubts about what happened: they have first-hand experience with affliction from an alleged witch. It is also worth noting that the *I saw* could have been left out in (3), and the deponent's claim that *Giles Cory came and afflicted me* would presumably have been accepted as first-hand experience (if the report was indeed believed, which it usually was). But the deposition has the deponent reporting visual perception of their *own* experience. While it would seem to be redundant to do so, it underscores that *saw* had other functions here in addition to marking source, such as indicating certainty and putting the spotlight on the witness's role in the CoP (see Chapter 7 for more discussion). Although SEE (as well as some other evidential markers) does not seem to be discussed much in stance research, it is included in some studies. Gray, Biber, and Hiltunen (2011: 256) includes SEE+*that*-clause as a marker of certainty (see also Hyland 2005). Chapter 7 demonstrates more holistically how marking source is a significant stance move throughout the Salem depositions.

Of course, there are hurdles in the kind of methodological approach that I have adopted. Most historical linguistic studies – and those with a sociolinguistic and pragmatic bent in particular – have to contend with the issue of temporal distance. That is, how can we reconstruct the historical context (broadly construed) for the linguistic usage to an extent adequate for us as modern researchers to understand the values, inflections, and functions of the usage? Sociolinguistic scholarship has revealed the complexity of studying indexical values of linguistic features in modern communities. The same feature can index different attitudes and values for different communities, and only immersion in a community can fully reveal the complex networks of meanings associated with linguistic usage (e.g., Eckert 2000, 2008, 2012; Becker 2009). Obviously, we do not have access to the Salem actors, the Salem CoP, or the broader community in a way comparable to modern ethnographic studies. We are thus faced with Labov's (1994: 11) famous "bad data" situation, well-known to historical linguists interested in the sociopragmatics of historical usage.

I do not deny this challenge and its potential impact on the results of this study. It is quite possible that particular uses and lexical items carried social, stance-related functions that cannot be uncovered here. Perhaps even certain pronunciations or intonations when the testimonies were read out in court (see 2.2) were significant for indicating stance alignment or disalignment with evidence and actors. Perhaps an "innocuous" feature served as a marker of solidarity or attitude among a more limited set of people, maybe even two. With such a well-studied historical event as the Salem witch trials, there is a great deal of information on the sociohistorical, legal, and religious context of the trial process. This information helps us in reconstructing some of the networks of stance meaning and usage that existed at the

time. In particular, I argue that looking at stance through the lens of a CoP firms up the appeal to the social, situational, and contextual, and pegs the usage on particular community goals and behaviors. I return to several examples that require a consideration of broader religious, legal, and historical factors to discover possible stance values, but one example, (4), can give a sense of the complexity of the usage and interpretation (cf. also example 2 above).

> (4)
> then allso dureing the time of his examination he did **afflect** and **tortor** me most greviously: (*RSWH*, no. 593)

In (4), Mercy Lewis, the deponent, notes her suffering in the hands of the alleged witch Giles Corey. We could argue that *afflect* and *tortor* are straightforwardly stance-related, as they signal Lewis's assessment of the severity of her experience. That is, the focus is more on the impact of the experience than what the experience or exact action was: what exactly did he do to make her feel afflicted or tortured? But the line between description and stance is not clear-cut. At the same time, as we shall see in detail in Chapter 5, these verbs (especially TORTURE) are by and large found only in depositions by the core accusers (mostly in the inner circle, but also in the outer) and some of their supporters (see also 3.3.3), and they echo formulations found in other documents, most importantly indictments. Indictments were formal charges presented against an accused before the Grand Jury, which would decide whether to send the accused to trial. What we thus see, I argue, is that certain accusers (and/or the recorders) employed the same language and echoed the formal charges in order to align with each other and the goals of the CoP (to bring witches to trial), and to place themselves as central participants in the endeavor. In other words, using these words was not a "neutral" act of description (whatever that would mean in this context; cf. Jaffe [2009b] cited in 4.2.1), but a conscious stance move.

    This kind of example also suggests that the linguistic stance moves and performances found in the witness depositions are only a limited set of possible expressions of stance. Modern sociolinguistic work has emphasized the various interacting semiotic systems available to express social meaning and stance (e.g., Eckert 2000, 2008), including clothing, behaviors, etc. This also accords well with descriptions of CoPs:, as we saw in 3.3.3, one of the cornerstones of CoPs is the "shared repertoire" of language, actions, artifacts, behaviors and the like that members use to express their membership and to carry out the goals of the community. In other words, in Salem, expressing a stance through language in depositions is just one way of taking a stance and showing membership in the CoP. One example of a different, but interacting semiotic system is likely behavior. We know from the court documents themselves and contemporaneous descriptions (e.g., Cotton Mather's *Wonders of*

the Invisible World [1693]) of especially the pretrial hearings that some of the core accusers would behave in certain ways, "performing" afflictions during hearings. These performances have similar functions to textual markers in the depositions, perhaps most notably degree modifiers such as *grievously* and *dreadfully*, which stress and act out the role of these accusers in the CoP. Taking on a broader linguistic and non-linguistic study of stance is obviously beyond the scope of this study, but it is important to keep in mind this dynamic and multilayered situation (see 6.1, Chapter 9).

Part of this complex dynamic situation is also the question of exactly whose stance the depositions reflect. As Chapters 2 and 3 have already indicated, the Salem depositions are intricate co-constructions, based on actual witness testimony, framing by one or more recorders, and perhaps earlier template versions of depositions. The exact contribution of various actors and factors to the creation of individual depositions is frequently difficult to tease apart. Subsequent chapters further emphasize this complexity. At the same time, the stance patterns in the depositions give us a sense of how the evidence was positioned and how the deponents were positioned by their statements, whether that positioning was accomplished by themselves and/or the writers of their depositions. Indeed, sometimes the interaction is inextricable and important for our understanding of what the stances are intended to accomplish within the Salem CoP. There are no easy answers here, and I return to these issues throughout my discussion.

Witness depositions are also complex in the way they incorporate multiple discourse levels (Grund and Walker 2011: 38–44). Not only do the deponents report their own experiences (filtered through the recorders' language), but they also include sometimes several layers of represented speech attributed to others. Such representation structures are discussed extensively in Chapter 7 as part of Quotative evidentiality, but, of course, stance language also occurs in the reported speech. In this study, I focus exclusively on the stance language that pertains to, is used by, or ascribed to the deponent, and stance that appears in represented speech is left out. In (5), the deponent, Mary Edwards, reports that Rachel Clinton expressed certain evaluations about the blood puddings that Mary was preparing, including the degree of love Rachel feels for such puddings (cf. Chapter 6).

> (5)
> ∧{she} ye aboue s^d Rachell siting by: ye fier) by: har discorse had a great dissire to haue sum of thos: pudens: saying y^t it was: **uery good** food: & y^t Ɨ {she} Loueed it **uery: well:**   (*RSWH*, no. 42)

Tracking and exploring such embedded stance could possibly give us further insight into how stance is deployed, more generally in the Salem depositions and also more specifically in how certain deponents and recorders position the accused and other

speakers whose language is being embedded in the depositions. But it also adds considerable challenges to analysis and interpretation, as these embedded instances are often decontextualized and they are of course one or more additional steps away from the original speaker, if indeed they were ever expressed rather than made up or paraphrased by the deponent or recorder (cf. Grund 2012a: 14).

Challenging is also the identification of the exact stance value a particular feature may have and its classification. Various overlapping frameworks and categories have been proposed to capture stance values. These proposals range from broad categorizations such as Biber et al.'s (1999: 972–975) tripartite division of "epistemic," "attitudinal," and "style of speaking" stance, to much more elaborate, multi-tiered stratifications. Biber and Finegan (1988: 7–8), for example, who discuss stance adverbials, delineate six semantic categories, including "manner of speaking," "approximation," "certainty and conviction," and "emphasis," among others. In the related conceptualization of metadiscourse, Hyland (2005: 49) proposes the two overarching categories of "interactive" and "interactional" metadiscourse, which are each divided into five subcategories, such as "hedges," "boosters," "self mentions," etc. (see also Martin and White 2005: 34–40 for appraisal). And, of course, Jaffe's (2009b) and Du Bois's (2007) approaches remind us of the additional layer of social positioning, in addition to the evaluation of the "stance object." This adds even more complexity to the task of identifying and classifying stance values. While the various categories proposed by existing literature are usually straightforward and well defined, it is frequently difficult to assign particular markers or stance moves to one category or another, and the stance value of one and the same marker may shift depending on context and user. In some ways, markers can be seen to have "indexical fields" (Eckert 2008), where different possible meanings are activated or enacted in particular situations. The rich potentials and multifunctionality of pragmatic features and the concomitant challenges in classification have long been recognized by scholars interested in pragmatic and discourse-related phenomena (e.g., Pichler 2013: 47).

My approach to issues of identification and classification of stance values and positional functions is of necessity text-driven and contextual. That is, the stance values are determined by how particular features are used in the text, and the interpretation depends on contexts of various kinds and often in combination (e.g., social, situational, generic, textual, legal, communal). One example, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 7 serves as an illustration, given in (6) (cf. also example 2).

> (6)
> I **beleev**: s[d] ffoster: is a wicth: & that: she hath afflicted me & Eliz Hubbard by witchcraft::   (*RSWH*, no. 617)

That *beleev* signals stance is not in doubt: it indicates a judgment on the part of the deponent regarding the information given (i.e., that Foster is a witch and that she has afflicted the girls by witchcraft). However, the more complex issue is what kind of judgment it represents and the stance it reflects. One might argue that it stresses the subjectivity of the statement, as it is not stated as a fact (as in "Foster is a witch…"), and as such it may seen as expressing some uncertainty and limitation in what the evidentiary value of the statement is; is this actual knowledge, or is it simply "belief" (in the modern sense of the word)? However, based on the contexts of Salem documents, *believe* is undoubtedly a marker of staunch conviction in most contexts, and it may even have been an expected, legal convention. It signaled not only adherence to the legal framework, but also, crucially, buy-in in terms of the Salem CoP's goal (see 7.3.3).

As noted in 4.2.1, my focus is on three broad functional areas where stance is frequent and variable in Chapters 5–7. Within these broader areas, there are more fine-grained stances and stance moves that cut across the areas, including expression of certainty, conviction, and of course positional alignment. These functional overlaps re-surface in Chapter 8, as we look at the stance profiles for groups of depositions, deponents, and recorders.

4.2.3 Historical stance

With my approach to stance, this book aligns more closely with some strands of current research on historical stance than others. As indicated in Chapter 1, the interest in stance in historical materials (whether under the stance umbrella or one of the related framings and terms) has increased substantially over the past two decades. We find broad "grammar of stance" approaches, which have shown the development of certain grammatical stance resources and variation across genres in historical periods of English (e.g., Biber 2004; Busse 2010; Gray, Biber, and Hiltunen 2011; Landert 2017, 2021; Lewis 2020; Traugott 2020; Van Linden 2020). A significant strand of research has been concerned with the development of stance-related meanings for particular linguistic features or groups of features (especially adverbs) over time, often discussed within the frame of grammaticalization, (inter)subjectification, or similar processes (e.g., Traugott 1989; Traugott and Dasher 2002; Fitzmaurice 2004; Brinton 2008; Defour 2008; Kaltenböck et al. 2020: 7).

There are also investigations that center on the use of stance at particular historical moments, and in specific communities, genres, situations, and interpersonal exchanges. The focal point of these studies differs substantially, as do their approaches and delimitations of stance (cf. Section 4.2). Some focus on the use of a particular marker or limited sets of markers in one generic context or among particular people (e.g., Fitzmaurice 2003; Alonso-Almeida and Mele-Marrero 2014;

Mazzon 2014; Grund 2017a, 2018a, 2020b), while others provide broader takes on the employment of stance for communicative, interpersonal, and social reasons, often with a discourse-analytical slant (e.g., Włodarczyk 2007; Boggel 2009; Levorato 2009; Dossena 2010; Cecconi 2012; Chaemsaithong 2012, 2014; Suhr 2012; Whitt 2018a). Together, these studies demonstrate the pervasiveness and complexity of stance in historical periods and the importance of tracing how stance is conditioned by and embedded in particular historical-synchronic communities and situations. The features that language users employed for stance purposes vary considerably across these studies (although there is of course also overlap), and the functions are similarly diverse, even for one and the same feature, along the lines of indexical fields as suggested in 4.2.2 (Eckert 2008). The contextual construal of stance shown in these studies highlights the importance for historical studies, whether diachronic or synchronic, to pay close attention to the specifics of the sociosituational embedding of the stance.

Much remains to be done in this regard to show the nature and development of these indexical fields and of the social underpinnings of those fields. My study joins this strand of research. It anchors the investigation in a particular community and charts what stance moves are performed and with what linguistic expressions (as detailed in 4.2.2). Particularly important for my study is the CoP framework, which, to my knowledge, has not been applied systematically in a historical study of stance (Chapter 3). The conceptualization of a CoP does not only fit the workings of the trial procedure at Salem particularly well, but it also frames the use of stance within specific larger communal patterns: of membership, social positioning, and social identity. As subsequent chapters show, this approach has significant payoff.

4.3   Conclusion

Stance is a complex linguistic and social phenomenon, and it is ubiquitous. This is true now, and it is true for the Salem depositions from 1692, as the chapters of this book demonstrate. The book charts the embedding of stance in a particular community, and its methodology, scope, and definition of "stance" is guided by this context and goal. As I have stressed before, this is not a comprehensive study of stance or stance markers at Salem. Nor is it an exhaustive account of all the stance moves found in the depositions. But it shows the rich array of stance moves and stance resources in the depositions that were particularly important for the actors in positioning the evidence presented and the deponents, and that show considerable variation across depositions and groups of deponents and recorders. The next four chapters detail the specifics of stance in the three functional domains that I laid out in 4.2.2 and discuss how the different stance uses create stance profiles for particular groups of depositions, deponents, and recorders.

"in A sudden, terible, & strange, unusuall maner"

Evaluating experience

5.1   Introduction

As the legal machinery was set in motion by the flood of witchcraft accusations in March and April of 1692 (and later), inhabitants of Salem Village, Salem Town, and adjacent communities were called to provide testimony in the legal cases against alleged witches.[1] Some came at their own initiative to have their statements written down or filed their own depositions; others were explicitly summoned to appear to have their testimony recorded (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 260, 323, 324). The narratives that poured in likely went far beyond what the authorities expected both in scope and complexity: there is a wide range of forms, stories, and experiences (as indicated in Chapter 2; see also Chapter 8). At the same time, the depositions align along a number of themes and topics. Not surprisingly, they all focus on deponents' experiences in situations that pertain to particular cases and on the actors in the trials, especially the witnesses themselves and the accused. This is also where we find significant stance negotiation. Especially when the deponents describe the central event that is allegedly connected to witchcraft do we find frequent overt stance expressed as well as variation in stance and stance values across depositions. Similarly in connection with the accused, varying stance work is evident in the depositions. In Sarah Gage's testimony of her encounter with Sarah Good in (1), for example, we see Gage's stance concerning how one of her cows died and, in her opinion, the likely witchcraft origins of the death.

> (1)
> [Hand 1] The deposition of Sarah Gadge yᵉ wife of thomas Gadge aged about 40 years this deponent testifieth & saith that about two years & an halfe agone; Sarah Good Came to her house & would have come into yᵉ house, but sd Sarah Gadge told her she should not come in for she was afraid she had been with them that had yᵉ smallpox; & with that she fell to **mutring & scolding extreamly** & soe; told sd Gadge if she would not let her in she she should give her somthing; & she

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> answered she would not have any thing to doe with her & the next morning after
> to sd Deponents best remembrance one ∧{of} sd Gadges Cowes Died in A sudden,
> **terible, & strange, unusuall** maner soe y^t some of y^e neighbors & said Deponent
> did think it to be done by witchcraft & farther saith not   (*RSWH*, no. 336)

We will return to the stance moves signaled by a deposition's use of degree modifiers ("extreamly") in Chapter 6 and the evidential markers indicating the source of the information ("told," "remembrance," "did think") in Chapter 7. Of primary interest in this chapter are some of the other features that encode the deponent's stance towards the central experience she reports and her (here indirect) characterization of Good. Most notably, the cow's death is framed to have been out of the ordinary and frightening: it was "terible, & strange, unusuall." Of course, we cannot tell what about the cow's death triggered such a reaction, but, importantly, the framing made the experience consonant with expectations of witchcraft (which is indeed how the deponent and her neighbors interpreted it according to the deposition). Simply noting the death of a cow in conjunction with Sarah Good's alleged threat ("told sd Gadge if she would not let her in ~~she~~ she should give her something") would likely have been damning (cf. Culpeper and Semino 2000). But stressing that the death involved various inexplicable (albeit unstated) aspects that inspired fear solidified the importance of the evidence and the witness for the trial process against Sarah Good; in other words, the stance mattered for the evidence and witness to be seen as relevant for the case at hand. Indeed, this deposition was used at the Grand Jury hearing, which determined that Good should stand trial. Gage also stresses Good's verbal behavior (*muttering* and especially *scolding*), evaluating (but not specifying) its characteristics. This alleged kind of non-Puritan use of language by Good was also what people expected from witches.

This chapter charts such stance moves made in the depositions focusing on the central experience that deponents describe and the actors in the trials. Some features are heavily used for conveying stance in this context (e.g., adjectives), while others are marshaled into service at particular points for particular purposes (e.g., verbs). Overall, then, the chapter not only records the various stance resources found in the depositions and their functions, but it also brings to the fore the complexity of stance identification in historical sources. After some background on stance in these contexts (5.2), in 5.3, I focus on the central narrative event or main experience related by the deposition, including unexplained occurrences, illnesses and death, and direct affliction (5.3.1); and the actors, including the so-called afflicted, the victims, and the alleged witches and wizards (5.3.2). I discuss both what aspects of the experience or actors trigger stance expressions and what expressions are used. I show that different kinds of stance narratives emerge and that these narratives are correlated with different groups of witnesses (core accusers vs. others)

or different kinds of evidence (direct affliction vs. unexplained events, illnesses and death) (see also Chapter 8). I argue that these correlations are important for our understanding of the different stance moves that witnesses and/or recorders of their testimony were making during the trials, including signaling and claiming a particular kind of membership in the Salem CoP.

5.2   Stance adjectives and beyond

As discussed in Chapter 4, the exploration of stance in this chapter does not focus on a particular kind of stance marker. Instead, it focuses on two broad functional contexts in which stance is expressed frequently and variably. This approach, which was corpus-assisted and text-driven, brought to the fore a broad range of markers that can be used to express stance, even if some markers are more common than others.

That stance should appear in the description of the central experience and of the actors is not surprising on one level, as they are obviously closely tied in with what the main aim of the proceedings and of the Salem CoP was: to identify and prosecute witches. However, we can also tie the occurrence of stance in with narrative theories. In Labov and Waletzky's (1967: 37) famous model of narratives, "evaluation" is an integral and crucial part of narratives: in their view, evaluation highlights the narrator's take on why the story matters. Providing evaluation avoids a response of "so what?". The Salem depositions differ in many ways from the personal narratives investigated by Labov and Waletzky (1967; cf. Harris 2001), and Labov and Waletzky's (1967) concept of evaluation has been criticized (e.g., Gwyn 2000). However, their insight does appear to match the dynamics that we see later in this chapter. The depositions record stance moves in places that seem to respond to a sense that the importance of the evidence for the case at hand needs to be clarified and highlighted. That would be when the deponents allege an experience connected to witchcraft or when providing a characterization of the accused. In Gage's example in (1), for instance, the deposition shows its importance for the proceedings against Good by highlighting the experience as connected to witchcraft through its *terrible*, *unusual*, and *strange* nature, and by recording a stance towards Good's verbal behavior that aligns Good with witchcraft. In other words, as stressed by the stance moves, the deposition and by extension the witness matter for convicting Good and hence for the CoP's joint enterprise of bringing witches to justice. I come back to further connections with Labov and Waletzky (1967) in Chapter 7.

In terms of stance features, adjectives surface as a major resource for stance-related work in the Salem depositions in connection with the central narrative event

and especially with the actors. To some extent, that is not surprising. Previous research has established that, although the stance category is "baggy" and its boundaries unclear, certain features frequently convey stance meanings while others less so, irrespective of what stance perspective – grammar of stance, appraisal, subjectivity, etc. – is employed (see 4.2). Adjectives have attracted considerable scholarly attention as vehicles for evaluative, stance-related meaning. As Martin and White (2005: 58) note, "the canonical grammatical realisation of attitude [a particular subcategory of their Appraisal concept] is adjectival" (see also Biber et al 1999: 671–672; Hewings 2004; Hyland 2005: 219–224; Finegan 210: 67; Gray, Biber, and Hiltunen 2011: 230, 256–257; Gray and Biber 2015: 228; Millar and Hunston 2015; Pérez-Blanco 2016; cf. Sveen 2005, 2010; Bäcklund 2006). At the same time, other features play significant roles in other contexts and for other types of depositions, quantitatively as well as qualitatively; some of the features rarely receive attention in scholarship on stance. As I stressed in Chapter 4, I do not intend to catalogue all stance features and moves, but I provide some quantitative overviews to give a sense of major variation in the documents and highlight some qualitative uses when such uses illustrate broader dynamics in stance. Chapter 6 continues this discussion by showing how the depositions deploy degree modifiers (especially in the form of adverbs) to emphasize and put a textual "spotlight" on particular aspects of the central narrative event and the descriptions of the trial actors.

5.3   Evaluating experience

5.3.1   Evaluating the central event

The Salem depositions are obviously centrally concerned with decribing experiences that were seen as pertinent to a case against a particular alleged witch. A few depositions (some 40 out of 457) provide character endorsements for alleged witches or try to falsify accusations by throwing doubt on the reliability of some of the accusers (see also 8.5). Since these depositions describe and evaluate the actors of the proceedings (primarily the accused) rather than a particular event or experience, I discuss them in the next Section (5.3.2). Here I focus on the majority of depositions (400+), which contribute to the corpus of incriminating evidence necessary for the Salem CoP's goal of identifying and prosecuting witches. Among these "accusatory" depositions, we find different kinds of experience narratives and hence different stance moves. Particularly striking is a division between a) the depositions that focus on personal affliction, which relate the tortures that a deponent alleges to have suffered at the hands of an accused or their apparition,

and b) depositions that are concerned with unexplained, mysterious events, which may include direct claims of affliction but usually focus on issues of illness, death, or allegedly supernatural occurrences. Although there are overlaps between these categories, the stance work involved in positioning the evidence and the deponents differ overall considerably in these two categories, and I argue that this is not only related to the type of evidence provided, but to the role that the deponent had or claimed for themselves in the Salem CoP (see also Chapter 8).

5.3.1.1 *Disease, death, strangeness, and fright*

Prominent among the narratives of unexplained events are those of disease and death. The deponents highlight their own bouts with disease or the painful witnessing of the lingering physical illness, mental decline, and often death of friends, family, and even cattle. Such evaluations appear in different linguistic shapes, and frequently in combination: nouns such as *illness*, *sickness*, *distemper*, *distraction*, *distress*, *flux*, *frensy*, *hurt*, *misery*, *oppression* (in the sense of being pressed hard), and *pain* are used to describe the deponents' perceived condition or that of others, and related verbs occur infrequently, such as *ail*, *pain*, and *pine*. But most commonly the evaluation is expressed with adjectives (sometimes in collocation with stance nouns), as illustrated in (2) and (3).

> (2)
> and at lenght wee p^rceiued his vnderstanding decayed Soe y^t wee feared (as it has Since proued) y^t he would be quite **bereaft of his witts**; for Euer Since he has bin **Stupified** and **voide of reason** his fitts Still following of him   (*RSWH*, no. 279)

> (3)
> from which tyme, the child y^t before was a very **Likely thriueing** Child ~~before~~ did pine away and was **never well**, althow it Liued some moneths after, yet in a **sad** Condition and soe dyed;   (*RSWH*, no. 230)

Table 5.1 gives an overview of the adjectives used in combination with evaluation of health states (including physical and mental health).

In trial proceedings focused on witchcraft, it is hardly surprising to see an emphasis on negative adjectival stance. While these stance markers are all concerned with issues of mental or physical health, they occur in slightly different situational contexts and linguistic cotexts. Some adjectives frame more narrowly the type or severity of illness, often collocating with particular nouns, such as *condition* in (4); others evaluate the state of health of the deponent or another person more directly or more generally (5). Yet others are connected with the perceived causes of disease or death, especially its assumed unnatural or supernatural origin (6).

Table 5.1 Adjectival evaluation of health states

Negative	Positive
Bad (4)	*Better* (5)
Bereaft (*of his wits*)	*Cheerly*
Bewildered (2)	*Good*
Crazed	*Healthy*
Cruel (2)	*Hearty*
Dead (8)	*Likely* (2) ('vigorous')
Deadly	*Lusty* (4) ('healthy')
Distracted (6)	*Stout*
Disenabled	*Thriving* (3)
Doleful	*Well* (21)
Drooping	
Ill (9)	
Languishing	
Mad (3)	
Malignant	
Not natural (3)	
Painful	
Sad (3)	
Sick (11)	
Sorrowful (2)	
Stupefied	
Troubled	
Uncapable	
Void (*of reason*)	
Never/not well (2)	
Weak	
Worse (12)	
81	40

(4)
and all summer affter he continewed in a **languishing** condition being much pained
at his stomack and often struck blind   (*RSWH*, no. 358)

(5)
on friday following, about one half of my right hand was greatly swolen & exceed-
ing **painfull**, & allsoe part of my face   (*RSWH*, no. 464)

(6)
And I knowe **not** of any **naturall** Causes of ye death of the aboues^d Creatures, but
haue always feared it hath been ye effect of my Aunt Martha Carrier her malice:
                                                                    (*RSWH*, no. 468)

Expressions that emphasize the unnatural origin or progression of disease and the ultimate death of people and cattle make the connection to witchcraft explicit and hence provide a straightforward accusation of an actionable offence related to a particular case. But these markers are overall uncommon.

Another strategy to accomplish a similar, though less explicit claim of witchcraft involvement is to juxtapose positive and negative stance markers. As seen in Table 5.1, there are few positive adjectives in the context of narratives of diseases and death. That seems hardly surprising considering the overall topic of the trials; instead perhaps the surprising part is the existence of such evaluations at all. These positive evaluations appear often to be deployed contrastively and hence strategically: they act as a foil for and foreground the unnatural or horrific nature of the disease and death. Examples (7) and (8) are cases in point.

> (7)
> The next day shee being Let out & went away wth the other catle (**well & Lusty** as far as we coold desern) but came home at evening very **Ill** hauing Atter vnder her eyes as bigg as wallnutts & dyed the same night (*RSWH*, no. 193)

> (8)
> presently after I was taken with a swelling in my ffoott & then was taken with a payne in my side Ecksidiengly Tormented, wich bred to a sore: which was lancit by doctor prescott & seuerall gallons of Corruption did Run out ∧{as was Judged} & so Continued about six weeks Very **bad**, & then one other sore did breed in my grine wich was lancit by doct. prescott also: & Continued very **bad** a while & then on other sore breed in my grine which was also Cutt: & putt me to very great missery, So that it brough me almost to Deaths doore, & Continued, untill goodwiffe Carrier was Taken & Carried awaye by the Constable, & that very day I begun to grow **better**, my soers grew **well** & I grew **better** Euery day: & so heue been **well** Euer since: [Hand 2] & haue great Cause to think that the s^d Carrier had a great hand in my sickness & misery. (*RSWH*, no. 463)

Example (7) is taken from Bernard Peach's deposition regarding an event dating back ten years before the Salem trials, when George Martin, the husband of Susanna Martin (an alleged witch), had been denied some meat that he had requested. What happened a few days later is described in the excerpt in (7). Here the contrast between a healthy and strong cow and the animal that returned in the evening and died is clearly supposed to imply an unnatural development: how could it possibly be that a cow can be so well in the morning and so sick in the evening unless supernatural powers are involved? At the same time, this implication is as explicit as the accusation against Susannah Martin gets in this deposition. In fact, she is never mentioned by name, and readers are presumably supposed to deduce that the deposition represented an accusation against Martin.

Example (8), on the other hand, is more elaborate and slightly more directive in terms of how the deponent and/or recorder wished the deposition to be interpreted. The contrast of negative and positive adjectives is clear with the initial condition characterized as *very bad*[2] and the deponent's subsequent health as *better* and *well*. As in (7), the connection to the accused is partly circumstantial: the deponent Benjamin Abbott appears to have had a land dispute with Martha Carrier, which was followed by Abbott's ailments. However, unlike Peach's deposition excerpted in (7), Abbott's deposition makes the accusation clearer: it was not until Carrier was apprehended that Abbott mended. Still, the "equation" presented by Abbott may not have been enough for the authorities or perhaps Abbott himself was dissatisfied with the clarity of his intention since a second recorder, "Hand 2," spells out the charge at the end of the deposition. Interestingly, while Peach's deposition does not appear to have been used as evidence during Martin's trial, Abbott's deposition was used against Carrier, as shown by the court clerk Stephen Sewall's annotation at the end of the deposition: "Jurat in Curia" ('swears in court'); Peach's deposition lacks this annotation.

At some level, describing an illness or death may be seen as just that: description of a (perceived) fact. But I argue that they are inherently stance moves: these expressions represent the deponents' assessement of their experience and align their narratives with a particular stance towards the accused and the goals of the Salem CoP. The contrastive juxtapositions are particularly revealing as the negative and positive evaluations act to highlight the accusation of witchcraft. As we shall see further in Chapters 7 and 8, there are complex patterns of implicit and explicit accusations in the Salem depositions, juxtapositions being just one mechanism among many.

A stance thread that is related to and overlaps with that of disease and death is that of fright and strangeness. The depositions frequently record the deponents' frightened responses to inexplicable occurrences (including diseases and death) and their perception of the events as out of the ordinary. Most of these evaluations come in the form of adjectives and adverbs, including *afraid*, *affright/affrighted/ frighted*, *strange* and *strangely*, *unusual* and *not usually*, but also with related verbs, such as *affright* and *fright*, and nouns, such as *fear* and *fright*. Illustrative examples are given in (9)–(11).

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2.   I have interpreted *very bad* as an adjective phrase here, in the sense of 'it continued to be very bad,' but it is possible that it should be considered an adverb phrase, with a zero adverb inflection. Either way, the contrast between the positive and the negative still stands.

(9)

Goodwife <?> Parker wife to Jn⁰ Parker Mariner Came to my hous: & went into the room where my wife & Children were & fauned vpon my wife wth very Smooth words in a Short tyme after that Child wch was Supposed to haue bin vnder an ill hand for Seuerall years before: was taken in a **Strange & vnuceall** maner as if his vitalls would haue broak out his breast boane drawn vp to gather to the vper part of his brest his neck & Eys drawne Soe much aside as if they would neuer Come to right againe he lay in So **Strange** a maner y^t the Docter & others did beleiue he was bewitched   (*RSWH*, no. 575)

(10)

ye body of itt looked like a Munky only ye feete ware ∧{like} a Cocks feete wth Claws and ye face somewhat more like a mans y^n a Munkies. and I being greatly **affrighted** not being able to speake or help my selfe by Reason of **feare** I suppose, soe the thing spake to mee and said […]   (*RSWH*, no. 278)

(11)

he heard a **strange** noyse **not useually** heard and so Continued for many times so y^t hee was **afrighted** and Comeing nearer to it he there saw a **strange and unuseall** beast lyeing on the Grownd so y^t goeing up to it ye s^d Beast vanished away and in ye s^d place starte up 2 or 3 weemen and flew from mee not after ye manner of other weemen but swiftly uanished away out of our sight which weemen wee took to bee Sarah Good Sarah Osburne and Tittabe   (*RSWH*, no. 14)

As is clear from the examples, narratives of strangeness and fright are closely intertwined, and the perceived unusual nature of the occurrence is often underscored by a clustering of stance expressions. Whether the fright expressed was genuine or not, emphasizing the emotional response to the related event and pinning it on supernatural happenings obviously aligned the depositions with the trial CoP goals. That is, it must have been important for deponents to spell out how and why they thought the testimony was relevant for a particular case. Although the description of the bodily ailments of the child of Samuel Shattuck (the deponent in example 9) seems evocative enough, evaluating it as *strange* and *unusual* provides an explicit framing of the experience as not natural, and hence interprets the event for the audience of the text. Of course, adding that a doctor (and others) thought it tantamount to witchcraft obviously contributed to the deponent's claim (and this deposition was indeed used as evidence during trial, as shown by the "Jurat in Curia" annotation at the end of the text). Leaving the implications of the events uninterpreted, however, would have opened up the possibility that the authorities had not fully grasped what is evident to the deponent: that this is a case of witchcraft (cf. the "so what" issue discussed in 5.2). In current US law, the "opinion rule" (Stygall 1995: 138) in many ways constrains witnesses to report facts rather than opinions. Obviously, no such rule was operative during the Salem trials, and, in

fact, there is reason to believe that deponents were encouraged to express their opinions and convictions. In other words, explicit stance is important for claiming the significance of the evidence for the Salem CoP (cf. 5.2). I return to this point in Chapter 7 in particular (see esp. 7.3.3).

If strangeness contributed to aligning the depositions with expectations of witchcraft, citing fright and fear likely had the effect of highlighting the deponents' victim status. As I show in 6.3.2.7, expressions of fright are more often than not boosted by modifiers of degree such as *greatly* and *much*, bringing even more emphasis to the deponents' reactions to whatever strange and unusual phenomena they claimed to have experienced. The signal is clearly that these are events that disrupt normal life, causing distress and uncertainty in the community, and the unspoken implication is that removing elements that effect such unrest is necessary.

As in the case of the narratives of illness and death, the deponents do not always level a direct charge, but often present circumstantial evidence and may or may not try to show the cause and effect of two events. In most cases, the cause-and-effect argument amounts to little more than logical leaps. In (12) (as in many other cases), the repetition of the deponent's stance (including two uses of *strange* and two of *strangely*) could have left no doubt that the deponent thought about the event as, to use the deponent's favorite word, "strange" (cf. example 8 above). To the deponent, it also seems justified to appeal to witchcraft because of Martha Carrier's earlier threat (which was seen as witch-like behavior; see 5.3.2), since no other explanation exists. Again, the authorities believed this deduction as the deposition was admitted into the trial evidence.

> (12)
> my husband Benjamin Abbott has not been only afflicted in his body, as he testifies, but alsoe that **strange & unusuall** ~~char~~ things has happened to his Cattle, for some haue died suddenly & **strangely**, which we Could not tell any naturall reason for, & one Cowe Cleaued a fourthnight before she Calued, but ye Cowe died afterwards **strangely** though she Calued well soe far as we Could ℘ceiue, & some of ye Cattle would Come out of ye woods wth their tounges hanging out of their mouths in a **strange & affrighting** manner, & many such things, which we Can give noe ~~acc~~ account of ye reason of, unless it should be ye effects, of Martha Carriers threatnings
> (*RSWH*, no. 463)

5.3.1.2   *Affliction*

As we saw in the previous section, the narratives of disease, death, strangeness, and fright are often connected to accusations or at least suspicions of witchcraft. But overall these depositions and their deponents are fairly circumspect as regards their accusations or the accusations are made indirectly. The depositions that claim direct affliction by alleged witches or their apparations, on the other hand, usually leave

no uncertainty about how the evidence should be interpreted and the deponents' stance towards their experience and the accused. Indeed, these depositions differ in fundamental ways from the earlier types of narratives in their characteristics and stance strategies as we shall see not only here and in the next section, but also across Chapters 6–8. These depositions are by and large limited to the group of core accusers and some other related deponents discussed in 3.3.4, whose depositions are written by a relatively small number of recorders. Prominent among the recorders is Thomas Putnam, and some of the patterns that emerge are primarily associated with his depositions or the deponents that he frequently writes for.

Front and center in the narratives of affliction are the deponents' alleged direct experiences with the accused. While there are differences depending on the accused and the deponent, the narratives reveal striking overlaps: the deponents claim to have been visited by the apparition of the accused (less commonly by the accused in person), and assaulted in various ways, sometimes after extensive threats or cajoling by the accused, including insistent urging to sign the Devil's book; they also report witnessing others being treated in a similar way. Some deponents purport to repeat extensive discussions with the accused where the alleged witches reveal various pieces of incriminating evidence against themselves, or murdered victims appear to charge the accused for their deaths. The alleged tortures lead to the brink of death for the deponents, but they escape (exactly how is left unstated). Example (13) written by Thomas Putnam captures many of these characteristic features.

> (13)
> The deposistion of Sarah viber who testifieth and saith that on the 9th day of may 1692 as I was agoeing to Salem village I saw the apperishtio<n> of a little man like a minister with a black coat on ~~on~~ and he pinched me by the arme and bid me goe along with him but I tould him I would not but when I came to the village I saw theire <?> Mr. Gorge Burroughs which I neuer saw before and then I knew that it was his apperishtion which I had seen in the morning and he tortured me seuerall times while he was in examination: also dureing the time of his Examination I saw Mr. George Burroughs or his Apparance most greviously torment and afflect mary walcott mercy [Hand 2] ∧{Luis} [Hand 1] Elizabeth Hubburt Ann putnam and abigaill williams by pinching ~~tiwi~~ twisting and al<m>[Lost] [= almost] choaking them to death also seuerall times sence Mr George Burroughs or his Apperance has most greviously tormented {me} with variety of tortors and I beleue in my heart that mr George Burroughs is a dreadfull wizzard and that he has most greviously tormen<t>ed me and the aboue mentioned parson by his acts of wicthcraft.
> (*RSWH*, no. 121)

Compared to what we saw in some of the narratives of disease, death, strangeness, and fright, there is little stance expressed in terms of adjectival description in Bibber's testimony (and in this type of narrative in general). When we do find

adjectival descriptions, they usually serve descriptive, identifying purposes. Clearly, Bibber is suggesting that she did not know who her assailant was other than that he was "little" and wore a "black" coat, until she saw George Burroughs later in the day during his examination. Burroughs held the embattled position of minister in Salem Village from 1680 to 1683 (Norton 2002: 125, 128), but was arrested in his current residence in Wells, Maine, and brought back for questioning (Norton 2002: 149), and he is frequently described as little, black-haired, and/or dressed in black by the group of core accusers who may have been too young to remember Burroughs's sojourn in the community (e.g., *RSWH*, no. 85, 122). In Bibber's testimony, the only exception to this descriptive use of adjectives is found at the end in "dreadfull wizard," where the deponent hammers home the accusation against Burroughs. In this context, I have considered *dreadful* a degree modifier, emphasizing Burroughs's wizard status. A common theme in testimony against Burroughs is his "ringleader" status among the alleged witches (Norton 2002: 149). Indeed, Elizabeth Hubbard's (a core accuser) deposition against Burroughts pegs him as "aboue a wizard: for he was a conjurar" (*RSWH*, no. 122). *Dreadful*, in other words, puts Burroughs in a different "wizard" category. I return to this intensifying usage in Chapter 6.

Overall, then, we see little stance expressed towards states as in the narratives in 5.3.1.1, and there is little explicitly expressed stance towards the actors involved (5.3.2). Instead, the focal point is the alleged affliction, the degree of the affliction, and the deponents' epistemological basis (that is, how they claimed to know what they know). Here I focus on the central event and leave the other stance features for Chapters 6 and 7. Table 5.2 gives an overview of the verbs that are used as the depositions describe and provide a stance on the affliction.[3] While the alleged attacks of witches are sometimes described with means other than verbs, such strategies are relatively rare. For example, for comparison, the nouns AFFLICTION, TORMENT, and TORTURE occur one, three, and twenty-three times in the depositions, respectively.[4] In almost all cases, these noun descriptions accompany and underscore the verbal narrative, as in (14) (see also 8.2).

> (14)
> darcas Hoar of Beurly has most greviouly tomentd [= tormented] me a grat many
> times with variety of **tortors**:   (*RSWH*, no. 402)

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3.   The lemmas include all forms of the verbs (including the base form, verbal *–ing*, past tense forms, verbal participles, and rare third person present tense forms).

4.   These figures include both plural and singular forms. AFFLICTION, especially, also occurs in other non-witchcraft contexts, such as Thomas Bradbury's description of his wife Mary Bradbury's state of health (see also 8.5): "Shee being now very aged & weake, & greiued vnder her **affliction** may not bee able to sₐ{p}eake much for her selfe" (*RSWH*, no. 439). Those examples are not counted here.

Table 5.2 Verbal descriptions of affliction[5]

Verbs	N
AFFLICT	366 (33%)
TORMENT	151 (14%)
CHOKE	140 (13%)
PINCH	112 (10%)
TORTURE	104 (9%)
BITE	47 (4%)
HURT*	41 (4%)
STRIKE (ESP., STRIKE *down*)	39 (3%)
PRICK	26 (2%)
BEAT	20 (2%)
PRESS	13 (1%)
BEWITCH	9 (<1%)
TWIST	8 (<1%)
STICK/RUN/THRUST *pins into*	6 (<1%)
KNOCK	5 (<1%)
SQUEEZE	5 (<1%)
DISJOIN/DISJOINT**	4 (<1%)
Other***	20 (2%)
Unclear	1 (<1%)
Total	1117 (100%)

* A significant number of examples of HURT also occur in represented speech in depositions endorsing the accusers (see 8.3). Those examples are not included here (cf. 4.2.2).

** In the context of bones being put out of joint (*OED* s.vv. *disjoin* and *disjoint*), although the examples are always found in hypothetical contexts, such as "as if indeed their bones would haue ben disjoynted" (*RSWH*, no. 137).

*** The Other category includes seventeen verbs with fewer than three instances each: ASSAULT, BEHAG, BREAK, BRUISE, DISQUIET, DISTRESS, DISTORT, MOLEST, NIP, PERPLEX, SCRATCH, SHAKE, TEAR, VEX, WRACK, WRING (*neck*), WHIP.

As is evident from Table 5.2, the attacks are described in numerous overlapping but also distinctive ways. Examples of the top six verbs are given in (15)–(20) for illustration.

> (15)
> I also saw the apperishtion of John willard there greviously **afflecting** the body of Daniell willknes who laid speachles and in a sad condition   (*RSWH*, no. 184)

> (16)
> she hath very often most dreadfully **tormented** me and parsons aboue named by hir acts of wicthcraft.   (*RSWH*, no. 205)

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5. These uses include only direct witchcraft affliction by alleged witches. Descriptions of attacks by mysterious animals are left out.

(17)

when euer she did but look upon me ~~w~~ she would strick me down or almost **choak** me to death   (*RSWH*, no. 93)

(18)

John Procter and his wif\<e\> hath **Pinch't** & Pricked this Deponent Likewise: sev-erall times: (*RSWH*, no. 194)

(19)

Eliz: Hubbard, Mary Warren & Ann Putman & John Indian were exceedingly **tortured** at the Examination of John Willard of Salem Husbandman, before the honoured Magistrates the .18. May .<u>1692</u>.   (*RSWH*, no. 176)

(20)

on the 12th of may 1692 in the Euening I saw the Apparition of gooddy Buckly come to me and **hurt** me   (*RSWH*, no. 171)

The experiences described range from very specific to very general, and from purely descriptive to more stance-related. And it is of course important to remember that these experiences are fictitious, or, if we interpret them charitably, imagined: most of the examples involve claims of assaults by appariations (or specters). Many of these verbs are arguably not straightforwardly stance-related, as they provide little evaluation of the situation, in terms of the emotional or attitudinal response of the deponents. Most of the verbs that allege very specific encounters would belong here, such as PINCH, PRICK, KNOCK, BITE, SQUEEZE, and others. Slightly different are the verbs that fall at the more general end, such as AFFLICT, TORMENT, TORTURE, HURT, and some of the less common verbs, including PERPLEX and VEX. That these are in-deed seen as more general by the deponents and/or the recorders of their testimony is highlighted when more specific descriptions are appended as clarifications of the nature of the assault, as in (21). Here the deponent specifies the torments as being bit-ten, pinched, and almost choked to death (see also *RSWH*, nos. 108, 112, 122, 129).

(21)

also seuerall times senc the afforesaid darcas hoar or hir Apperance has most gre-viously **tormented** me by **biting pineching and allmost choaking** me to death
                                                                    (*RSWH*, no. 405)

One can reasonably argue that TORMENT, TORTURE, AFFLICT, and HURT involve an emotional and attitudinal response. Indeed, rather than the nature of the attack, they emphasize the impact of the assaults on the alleged victim, which clearly in-volved both physical and mental anguish, and, as such, they also stress the victim-ization of the deponent. This, I argue, is crucial for understanding these deponents' stance moves, whether created by themselves or the recorders of their testimony. Of course, some of the deponents who provide narratives of fright and disease also put their own suffering front and center. But these depositions bring the focus to

the deponents themselves to a different level: where other narratives often leave the link unclear, these depositions make the connection between their suffering and witchcraft assaults explicit and (to them) undeniable, and they hence make the connection between the spectral and the real world tangible and real. These deponents see, hear, and are physically exposed to apparitions. Their depositions thus attempt to put the deponents in a different category of witnesses, ones that have a crucial, central role in the Salem CoP: they provide seemingly incontrovertible evidence of actionable offences that fall in line with the CoP's goals; in other words, they "project a stance of privileged personal knowledge" that is crucial for carrying out the CoP's joint enterprise (Jaffe 2009b: 7).

In addition to signaling an overt emotional, attitudinal, or generally evaluative response, I would also argue that these verbs are involved in stance moves. As discussed in Chapter 4, a vast number of features can be marshaled into service as stance markers, and the use is not predictable based on form alone (e.g., Martin and White 2005; Jaffe 2009b: 4; Hunston 2011: 13). The importance is not in the nature of the word but what it is used to accomplish. My argument here is that the use of words such as TORMENT, TORTURE, and AFFLICT and perhaps even some of the more specific terms allow the deponents to take up a stance that aligns them with each other as a particular group and with the goals of the CoP. That is, the words themselves (irrespective of their denotative meaning) are emblematic markers of community membership.

It is likely also not insignificant that the verbs AFFLICT, TORMENT, and TORTURE are used in the formal indictment documents that were presented to the Grand Jury, which determined whether the accused should stand trial. An example is given in (22).

> (22)
> [Hand 3] Mary Easty wife of Isaack Easty of Topsfield husbandman~~in~~ on the twenty{third} <?> [Hand 2] Day of [Hand 3] May [Hand 2] in the [Hand 3] fourth [Hand 2] year of the Reigne of our Sovereigne Lord and Lady William and Mary by the Grace of God of England Scottland ffr<a>nce and Ireland King and Queen Defenders of the ffaith &^{c} and Divers other Dayes and times as well before as After certaine Detestable arts called Witchcrafts and Sorceries Wickedly and ffelloniously hath vsed Practised and Exercised at and within the Township of [Hand 3] Salem [Hand 2] in the County of Essex aforesaid in vpon and against one [Hand 3] Marcy Lewis of Salem Villiage Singlewoman [Hand 2] by which said wicked Arts the said [Hand 3] Marcy Lewis [Hand 2] the ~~Day~~ [Hand 3] Twenty third [Hand 2] Day of [Hand 3] May [Hand 2] in the Year abovesaid and Divers other Dayes and times as well before as after, was and is **Tortured Afflicted Pined Consumed wasted & Tormented**. ag^t the Peace of our Sovereigne Lord & Lady the King and Queen and ag^t the form of the statute in that case made and Provided   (*RSWH*, no. 459)

While *pined*, *consumed*, and *wasted* do not occur in the depositions in the context of affliction,[6] the other three words do and using them obviously aligned the experience and hence the charge with the formal legal machinery that could lead to trial.

At the same time, it is not entirely clear how the relationship of the depositions and the indictment documents should be viewed. The first indictments were issued in June 1692 (*RSWH*, no. 273) after Governor Phips arrived from England with a new charter and instituted the Court of Oyer and Terminer to hear the cases against alleged witches, which had been piling up since the initial accusations in February and March. Before these indictments, numerous depositions had already been filed that used AFFLICT, TORMENT, and TORTURE. The question is then whether the formulation in the depositions influenced or even dictated the formulation of the indictments. In terms of the production of the indictments, we know that they were produced by a small number of recorders, who constructed the indictments as fill-in-the-blank forms that could be quickly completed as new cases surfaced (Grund et al. 2009: 68). Exactly where the recorders found the appropriate indictment formulations remains uncertain. Doty and Wicklund (2017: 247) note that some formulations are found in earlier witchcraft statutes from England, such as King James's 1604 "ACTE against Conjuration Witchcrafte and Dealinge with evil and wicked Spirits" (Newton and Bath 2008: 233–244). Indeed, there we find the "actionable" verbs as "Killed, Destroyed, Wasted, Consumed, Pined, or Lamed in His or Her body, or any part therof." The Salem indictments' use of CONSUME, PINE, and WASTE thus seem to hail from the witchcraft statute originally.

However, there may have been intermediary texts. We know that many lawbooks and legal manuals from England circulated in New England at the time, and that several of them where available to and likely used by at least some of the people involved in the trials (Hoffer 1998: 7; Rosenthal 2009: 18; see 2.2). One such text is Joseph Keble's *An Assistance to Justices of the Peace* (1683). This text was consulted during the Salem trials according to the minister John Hale (1702: 27–28), who claimed to have observed the use of the book (see 2.2). Keble (1683: 220) has a model for a witch trial indictment, written in Latin, which directly translated is a very close match to the Salem indictment formulations. However, the string of actionable offense verbs is not listed there (only *occidit* 'killed' and *interfecit* 'murdered'). Additionally, while there is no documented use of this text, Thomas Fidell's *A Perfect Guide for a Studious Young Lawyer* (1658: 227–228) contains template texts for several indictments to be used in cases of witchcraft. These templates differ in some respects from the Salem indictments but also show striking overlaps. In

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6.   CONSUME does not occur at all in the Salem depositions, while WASTE occurs in other contexts related to disease or assets. PINE only occurs in context of disease (though a witchcraft origin is often implied).

those indictments, we find the "actionable" verbs as "greatly tormented in his body, and did languish, and became lame" (Fidell 1658: 228). Although not conclusive, of course, it does show that at least *torment* was used in indictments related to witch-craft, and it is thus not unlikely that there were clear models that the indictment recorders could draw on that may have included all three verbs (AFFLICT, TORMENT, TORTURE). Even if we assume that indictment formulations were originally dictated or influenced by the depositions themselves, that does not deny that the verbs had stance-related functions as the trials continued, including aligning the deponents with the goal of the Salem CoP. I return to this discussion in 6.2.3.9.

There are yet other complicating factors. It is true that the words AFFLICT, TORMENT, and TORTURE are rarely, if ever, used in depositions that do not record the experiences of the core group of accusers, including the inner and outer circles, and some of those who may have aspired to be part of the group. Some of the other, more specific terms are found in other contexts as well, perhaps not surprisingly as they encode more specific and more straightforwardly identifiable experiences. At the same time, as we saw in 3.3.4, Thomas Putnam writes a majority of depositions for the core group of accusers as well as many other aspirational core accusers. As discussed earlier and as will become a theme throughout this book, these deposi-tions frequently overlap and overall show very little variation. Indeed, as far as the verbs discussed here are concerned, they often occur multiple times in one and the same deposition, often in recurrent phrasings such as *afflicted and tormented* and *afflicted and tortured* or the reversed order (see also Doty and Wicklund 2017: 255–256), as in (23).

(23)
The Deposistion of Eliz: Booth agged about. 18 years who testifieth and saith that severall times since the later<?> end of June 1692. I haue ben most greviously **af-flected** and **tormented** by John willard or his Apperanc by pinch<in>g pricking and almost choaking me to death: also I haue often seen John willard or his apperanc most greviously **tormenting** and **afflecting** my Brother Gorge Booth almost Redy to kill him: Susannah Shelden also Testifieth that within this fortnight she hath seen John willard or his Appera<nce> most greviously **torment** and **afflect** George Booth allmost Redy to prese him to death.   (*RSWH*, no. 472)

So are these patterns simply a result of Putnam writing the documents? That is, is it less a question of positioning the evidence and the deponents and simply an issue of recorder preferences? There are several ways of gauging this issue. Thomas Putnam does not write for all of the core accusers and not all of the depositions for all of them. While we do not see the same consistent use of these terms, they do show up in other depositions by the core accusers, written by other recorders. For example, Samuel Parris writes the majority of depositions for his niece, Abigail Williams. In

those depositions, we find the uncommon verbs DISQUIET, VEX, and PERPLEX to describe and assess Williams's experiences. These verbs are vanishingly rare outside texts written by Parris.[7] We also find several examples of AFFLICT (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 113, 138, 207) and one example of TORTURE (*RSWH*, no. 246) in his depositions. Simon Willard recorded a number of testimonies delivered to the Grand Jury (see 2.3), among those many depositions by core accusers (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 480, 555, 567). In these depositions, we find a ubiquitous use of AFFLICT, while TORTURE is non-existent and TORMENT found less than a handful of times (e.g., *RSWH*, no 595). These patterns seem to indicate that the use of TORMENT and TORTURE is primarily associated with Putnam's depositions for the core and related accusers, whereas AFFLICT has wider currency in terms of evaluating the deponents' experiences.

Indeed, in depositions supporting the accusers as well as in examination documents and contemporaneous writings, the group of deponents that allege direct affliction by an accused or their apparition is usually referred to as *the afflicted*, *the afflicted persons*, *the poor afflicted*, and the like (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 102, 150, 165, 173, 176).[8] It is not always clear who is included in this grouping. Although some of the depositions that endorse the accusers' accounts specify names in the context of the label (e.g., *RSWH*, no. 176), they often seem to include a larger set of accusers than named. What it does show, though, is that a particular group emerged that was distinct from others and that this group was recognized with a label that highlighted their type of suffering. That label, *afflicted*, drew on and was reinforced by the insistent us of AFFLICT in the depositions by the core (and some related) accusers. In other words, the label is used in recognition of the different semiotic systems – linguistic as well as behavioral – that the accusers and the recorders of their testimonies employed. We see how a particular and distinct role was claimed and negotiated by as well as attributed to this group within the Salem CoP.

Overall, depositions written by Thomas Putnam emerge as crucial in establishing and maintaining the linguistic fashioning of the afflictions and the group of "the afflicted." However, it remains unresolved what the exact role of Putnam was in providing this linguistic fashioning: is he simply recording what they say or did he put words into their mouths for his own purposes? This is not an easy question to answer. But I continue to explore these patterns and the implications in the following chapters, and the question is treated more fully in Chapter 8, once we have seen patterns in degree modifiers (Chapter 6) and evidentials (Chapter 7).

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7.   VEX, for example, is found in an examinations document written by Parris (*RSWH*, no. 28) in the context of describing the sufferings of the "afflicted."

8.   We also find, though more infrequently, the designation *the (poor) bewitched (persons)* (*RSWH*, nos. 20, 49, 52, 120, 362), but not phrases involving TORTURE or TORMENT.

5.3.2 Evaluating the actors

At the center of the deposition narratives are not only the alleged events that the deponents claimed were of relevance for the trials, but also the actors in the trials. As we saw in Chapter 3, the Salem CoP involved people with various roles in the trials and people with various degrees of membership. Most of these people do not appear in the witness depositions, even if they had prominent roles in the trial proceedings in general. Magistrates, constables, and clergy do not play prominent roles in the depositions, unless they are themselves witnesses or recorders, and, if they do feature in the documents, they and their roles are usually not involved in stance-related work. Instead, not surprisingly, where we do find deponents and recorders engaging in stance moves is in connection with the accused, with the deponents themselves, or with the accusers (if they are not the same as the deponents). We have already seen how deponents evaluate their own suffering and victimhood (or that of their near and dear) in 5.3.1.1. Here I look more closely at how the depositions reflect the deponents' evaluation of others and in so doing show their stance toward and hence alignment or disalignment with the accused and accusers.

Most of the evaluation comes in the form of adjectives, attributing some kind of quality to the person involved, as in (24), but the description can also be more indirect, focusing on a behavioral trait or tendency in (25) and (26), where a verb and an adverb, respectively, highlight the deponents' stance towards the described event and, in most cases, the speaker (Du Bois 2007).

> (24)
> I found hur **Joust** In hur delling **faythfooll** too hur prommisis [2nd "m" written over "i"]   (*RSWH*, no. 317)
>
> (25)
> I y^e s^d mary gaue: har: y^e s^d Rachell one of y^e pudens: y^e which she Reseaued uary: **Cornfully**: [= scornfully]   (*RSWH*, no. 42)
>
> (26)
> ∧{Rechell Clenton} Cam to our house and Charged me with Raisen Lies of hur About my Daughter and mary Thorne and whille she s^d Rechell was **Araueing** [= raving]: my Brother Joseph ffullers Boy Cam in and said their Betty was fell Downe Ded   (*RSWH*, no. 37)

In (24), the deponent, Simon Chapman, uses the positively-laden adjectives *just* and *faithful* to endorse the character of one of the accused, Elizabeth How. The use of *scornfully* and *raving* in (25) and (26), on the other hand, shows the negative evaluation of Rachel Clinton and her behavior. The stances signaled in these examples also imply alignment (positive) or disalignment (negative) with the people described, which of course has larger implications for the stance towards the prosecution of witches.

Table 5.3 gives an overview of stance-related adjectival usage that is connected to the actors in the depositions and behavior and actions attributed to them.

Table 5.3 Adjectival evaluation of actors

Positive	Negative
Careful ('full of care') (2)	*Angry* (8)
Charitable	*Bad* (5)
Cheerful	*(Maliciously) Bent*
Christian	*Discontent* (2)
Christian-like	*Double-tongued*
Civil (2)	*Fearful*
Conscientious	*Ill* ('evil') (3)
Curteous	*Evil* (2)
Diligent (2)	*Given to* X (3)
Dutiful	*Harsh*
Faithful (4)	*Idle*
Full of (*charity/mercy*) (2)	*Importunate*
Godly	*Incapacious*
Good (4)	*Malicious*
Honest (2)	*Rude*
Innocent	*Sharp*
Industrious	*Simplish*
Kind	*Slighty*
Laborious ('hard-working')	*Spiteful*
Liberal	*Turbulant* (5)
Loving (4)	*Unruly* (4)
Neighborly	*Unseasonable*
Not ill ('not evil') (2)	*Vile*
Obedient	*Weak* (in a moral sense)
Peacible	
Pious	
Prudent	
Provident	
Rational (2)	
Ready (*to*+verb) (2)	
Serious	
Sober (2)	
Thorough	
Not unbecoming (2)	
Not unsuitable	
Willing	
Wonderful	
56	48

As may be seen, the positive-negative split in adjectives is fairly even, although positive adjectives are slightly more common and certainly more variable. The even distribution is in itself notable: considering the nature of the trial process and the patterns that we saw in the evaluation of the central narrative event, one would expect a predominance of negative characteristics and behaviors to be emphasized. But these numbers indicate a more nuanced and striking picture. Negative and positive aspects can of course also be expressed by other means, not least by adverbs (see example 31 further below; also 6.3.2.3). However, these, more infrequent characterizations do not change the overall picture.

Virtually all of the positive adjectives relate to the accused, and they are almost exclusively, and not surprisingly, found in the small set of depositions (about 40 out of 457) that provide character endorsements for some of the accused. As they do so, they focus on and emphasize a number of characteristics: duty; devotion to family, neighbors, and friends; work ethic; religious devotion; and inherent morality and goodness.[9] We often find the adjectives stacked, listing the many admirable characteristics, as in (27).

> (27)
> The Deposision of Debory Hadley aged about 70 yeares: this Deponant testifieth & s^h that I haue liued near to Elizabeth How (y^e wife of James How Junior of Ipswich) {24 <y>ear} & haue found her a **Neighbourly** woman **Consciencious** in her dealing **faithfull** to her pmises [= promises] & **Christian=like** in her Conuersation so far as I haue obs<er>ued & further saith n^t June 24 .1692.   (*RSWH*, no. 316)

When these supporting depositions raise issues of behavior (*conversation*, *carriage*, *behavior*, and *deportment*), it is often in the negative; that is, it is the absence of unseemly and unexpected actions and behavior that is stressed, or the focus is on a contrast, as may be seen in (28) and (29).

> (28)
> wee [2 words illegible] sow **noe ill** carreg or Behauor in tham But that thare daportmont wose varey s<a>**bere** and **ciuell**   (*RSWH*, no. 602)

> (29)
> I **neuer** knew **nor** heard of any euill in her carriage or conuersation **unbicomming** a christian   (*RSWH*, no. 315)

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9. These themes dovetail in interesting ways with the "voices" of belief, community, and family that Doty (2018) identifies in petition documents from the Salem corpus. Such overlaps of course point to other sites of resistance against accusations of witchcraft, but also highlight that similar means (linguistic and thematic) were employed there as in the depositions, as part of the shared repertoire of practices in the Salem CoP (see 3.3.3).

The negative side of the adjectival description, on the other hand, is found in depositions focusing on accusations of witchcraft. These depositions show a focus on behavior and temporary states of mind more than (inherent) qualities of the accused. Alleged witches are seen as *angry*, *discontent*, *importunate*, *rude*, and *unseemly*, often in reaction to some event or reaction by the deponent. In (30), for example, the deponent John Allen evaluates Susannah Martin's reaction to his refusing to assist her (I return to the use of *seemed* in this context in Chapter 7).

> (30)
> susana martin then wif of Georg martin desired this deponent to cart staves for them which this deponent refused to do because of his oxn which wear weake & needed now to gett flesh, but shee seemed to be **discontent** (and as Jams freez and others then present told this Deponent) (that shee sayd) I had had ben as good I had (for my oxn shoold never do me much more servis)　　(*RSWH*, no. 311)

Several negative adjectives are only used indirectly to describe an accused's behavior. *Vile*, *ill*, and *bad* especially are found in the context of verbal behavior, collocating with *names*, *words*, and *wishes*, as exemplified in (31). Of course, in this example, the accused is also characterized in terms of her behavior, which certainly adds to the negative evaluation, but again stresses temporary states rather than inherent qualities.

> (31)
> she the said Sarah good: ever since these Dponants turned ∧{her} out of their howse she hath ~~carried~~ behaveed her selfe very crossely & Mallitiously, to them & their Children calling their Chillren **Vile** Names and hath threetened them often./
> (*RSWH*, no. 352)

As we will see in Chapter 7, deponents paid a great deal of attention to what others said, and reporting overheard words is common in the Salem depositions and a central concern for ferreting out witches. While deponents sometimes limit themselves to (allegedly) repeating what they have heard, they also add evaluations about the nature of the speech, as in (31). These evaluations do not only come in the form of adjectives, but the nature of the speech act is often emphasized through the use of the reporting verbs themselves. In (32), the deponent Sarah Holton characterizes Rebecca Nurse's speech as *railing* and *scolding* (cf. *threatened* in 31). Importantly, Holton does not provide the details of the alleged railing and scolding; instead, she uses a so-called "narrator's representation of speech acts" (Semino and Short 2004: 73–77). She describes the perceived speech act of the speech with the help of the verb but does not indicate the content of the spoken words. By doing so, she puts her own interpretation of what was said front and center; in other words,

readers (especially the authorities) are not given the opportunity to evaluate the words themselves, because she has already evaluated the intention and impact of the speech and by extension the speaker (Walker and Grund 2017: 17).

> (32)
> Rebekah nurs who now stands charged for wicthcraft: came to our house and fell **arailing** at him because our piggs ["p" written over "b"] gott into hir feild: tho our piggs ware suffisiently yoaked and their fence was down in seuerall places: yett all we could say to hir could no ways passifie hir: but she continew{ed} **Railing** and **scolding** a grat while together calling to hir son Benj. nurs to goe and git a gun and kill our piggs <"p" written over "b"> (*RSWH*, no. 358)

This focus on verbal behavior is reflective of a broader belief in and fear of a witch's verbal power. As Kamensky (1997: 152–154) has shown, certain verbal practices – lying, cursing, railing, threatening etc. – were seen as hallmarks of witches (see also Kamensky 1998; Culpeper and Semino 2000; Leitner 2017; cf. Hale 1702: 66–67, citing a number of contemporaneous "authorities" on detecting witchcraft). Indeed, as Kamensky (1998: 40) puts it, among New Englanders, "[b]eing able to hear a witch – to distinguish her by her manner of speaking – was a vital step on the road to disempowering her." Indicating a stance towards the speech (through adjectival and verbal features) is thus part of characterizing and evaluating the accused themselves.

We see a particularly intricate use of negative adjectives and depictions of verbal practices in an infrequent but enlightening pushback against one of the accusers. In four closely related depositions (*RSWH*, nos. 364, 365 (x2), 367), deponents attack Sarah Bibber, an accuser who appears to have behaved very similarly to those of the core inner group, but does not seem to have been accepted by the group (see 8.2). The concerted effort to throw doubt on Bibber's legitimacy as a witness and accuser is underscored by the fact that three of the depositions (364, 365 [second deposition], and 367) were written by the same recorder. It is therefore perhaps not surprising to see that the wording is similar in all of the depositions, illustrated in (33) from *RSWH*, no. 364. This again stresses the complex co-construction of testimony during the Salem trials and the issue of whose stance is reflected in the Salem depositions (see 2.3).

> (33)
> I did obserue and take notice, that Goodwife Bibber was a woman, who was uery **idle in her calling** And uery much **giuen to tatling & tale Bareing** makeing mischeif amongst her neigbo⁰ˢ, & uery much **giuen to speak bad words** and would call her husband **bad names**, & was a woman of a uery **turbulent unruly** spirit
> (*RSWH*, no. 364)

As in some of the accusations against alleged witches, Bibber is accused of reprehensible verbal behavior, including lying, name calling, and swearing; she is also seen as slothful and being of *an unruly turbulent spirit* (a phrase that is repeated almost verbatim in all of these depositions).[10] In other words, by highlighting these evaluations, the deponents are clearly making a point: if the accused are convicted on the basis of the quality of their verbal behavior and actions, then should not the same hold for one of the accusers? It is unlikely that the intended implication is that Bibber is a witch, but rather that these kinds of evaluations are not sufficient for conviction of the accused (for the use of *very* in this context, see 6.3.2.7). At the same time, there is also a contrast, indirect or direct: as we saw above, the supporting evidence puts the spotlight on the accuseds' work ethic, and their civil, neighborly, and measured "deportment." Clearly, Bibber is intimated as possessing none of these qualities. The stance work clarifies that the deponents align with the accused and disalign with Bibber and hence with the Salem CoP in general.[11]

Overall, what is most remarkable about the negative side of the evaluation is its scarcity overall. That is, rarely do we find evaluation of behavior, and vanishingly rarely do we find negative evaluations of the character of an alleged witch. This is particularly true for the depositions by the core and related accusers. As we saw in 5.3.1.2, these depositions focus on events and the alleged affliction of the deponents, but virtually never are there comments that provide a stance on a character or other aspects of the accuseds' behavior (apart from the affliction). There is of course opportunity to do so as the depositions provide "textual slots" for such stance markers, including possible collocating nouns such as *witch* and *apparition*, but we never find "evaluative adjective"+ *witch* or "evaluative adjective"+*apparition*. The core group depositions instead stay very much on message emphasizing the affliction. It is tempting to suggest that evaluation was discouraged, and that stance-laced descriptions focusing on the character and behavior of the accused would have been seen as groundless. However, since clear stance markers do occur here and there, in depositions that were used as evidence during the trials, this is unlikely. Indeed, I have suggested the opposite in terms of the narratives of disease, death, strangeness, and fright, and return to this issue in Chapter 7. Rather, what is at stake here is that the premium evidence for the accusers was their own affliction, which put them in a different category than other accusers and hence elevated them to a

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10. Interestingly, a similar formulation, "Turbulant a Spirritt," appears in *RSWH*, no. 352, a deposition against Sarah Good, one of the first three women to be accused.

11. It is unclear whether *RSWH*, nos. 364, 365 (x2), and 367, were written in indirect support of one of the accused. *RSWH* suggests that it may have been Rebecca Nurse, but it remains uncertain (see 8.5).

different role in the Salem CoP, as we also saw in 5.3.1.2. *That* is the type of evidence that required evaluation and emphasis for the core and related accusers.

The overall picture that emerges from the stances expressed toward the accused and sometimes toward the accusers is one of competing narratives. The depositions that endorse an accused focus on behavior and especially qualities that accord with Puritan beliefs: work ethic, Christian charity, and devotion to family, friends, and community. These evaluations and the stance that they entail (aligning the deponents with the accused) respond – sometimes directly and at other times indirectly – to the narratives of affliction, unneighborly actions, and suspicious behavior that surface in accusatory depositions. Most evidently, we see the countering of or disalignment with these narratives in the explicit negation of negative evaluation (*not ill*, *not unbecomming*, *not unsuitable*; see 8.4 and 8.5), but the attempt to deflect or throw doubt on accusations are also clear in the claims of the virtues possessed by the accused: if they are caring, loving, obedient, prudent, kind, faithful, honest and much more, could they possibly commit the attrocious acts attributed to them that are the very essence of uncaring, hateful, evil, deceitful individuals? It is interesting, however, that the countered narratives are more implicit than explicit in terms of the stance expressed. That is, in the depositions that allege witchcraft, the accused are rarely explicitly positioned as uncaring, hateful, evil, and deceitful. We do see evaluations of verbal behavior and of temporary states (anger, passion, scornfulness, etc.), and the speech is often negatively evaluated as an entry point to an accused's alleged character. But these stance moves are not frequent. What matters instead, as we saw in 5.3.1, is the description of affliction, and the deponents' reactions to unexplained events, mysterious illnesses, and suspicious deaths. I return to this point in the next section (5.4).

5.4   Conclusion

Even if events and actions are contested, we expect modern trials and the evidence presented therein to focus on facts and leave out subjective evaluations and opinions. The witch trials and the testimonies submitted as evidence at Salem clearly do not reach that bar, and there does not seem to have been an expectation for them to do so. Instead, we find subjective, stance-related evaluations throughout that try to position the narratives and narrators in a particular way that promotes the goals of the witnesses and the larger Salem CoP. This is evident both in the way the events are framed and the actors are discussed. The depositions fall into different groups in terms of the types of evidence that they appeal to, and the evidence types and the identity of the deponents correlate with specific stance moves. The depositions that focus on direct affliction home in on evaluating the alleged torments and tortures

of the victims, with little explicit commentary on the accused; the nature of their accusations is unequivocal. Depositions that revolve around topics of disease, death, strangeness, and fright, on the other hand, provide more indirect accusations, instead often asking readers to put two and two together, so to speak: someone has suffered illness and death or experienced something unusual and frightening, after having an altercation or disagreement with an alleged witch or their relatives; ergo, witchcraft. These narratives often highlight behaviors that would be consonant with expectations of witchcraft. A third type of testimony, statements endorsing an accused, pushes back against the other two types. Depositions of this kind focus very much on stance work in terms of the character traits and hence the actors, stressing the work ethic, Christian charity, and devotion to family, friends, and community of the accused. There is a clear counternarrative in these depositions and their stancework: their attitude to the accused is clearly positive, and they align with the accused and disalign with the accusers, providing details that are supposed to address and throw doubt on the allegations. While descriptions of affliction and strange and deadly events give a picture of un-Christian actions that threaten to disrupt bonds of family and community, the endorsing statements stress as inherent traits of the accused the characteristics that would indicate the opposite. These deponents thus also place themselves in opposition to the CoP's main goals (at least in terms of the legal case for the accused that they endorse). These deposition groupings and themes will be elaborated in Chapter 8.

The resulting body of testimony is complex, reflecting the artful positioning of the accusers who aim to contribute to the CoP's goals, as well as the desparate responses by defenders of the accused. As we shall see in Chapter 6, we find similar, but also distinct patterns in how the deponents wielded modifiers of degree, scaling their description up or down as it suited their unfolding narratives.

CHAPTER 6

"I haue ben most greviously affleted"
Intensifying experience

6.1   Introduction

A phenomenon that is frequently highlighted in modern histories and accounts of the Salem trials is the histrionics of some of the alleged victims of witchcraft attacks.[1] These observations are primarily based on the pretrial examination records, which depict (sometimes in graphic detail) the torments that the victims purportedly suffered during a magistrate's cross-examination of an accused (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 75, 86, 90). Indeed, Samuel Parris famously notes in his record of Rebecca Nurse's pretrial hearing that "This is a true account of the sume of her Examination but by reason of great noyses by the afflicted & many speakers many things are pr<ae>termitted [i.e., 'omitted']" (*RSWH*, no. 28). Contemporaneous accounts such as that by the former Salem minister Deodat Lawson (1692) add to the picture of the hearings as loud, boisterous events, where the victims would fall into extended fits and cry out against the alleged hellish torments visited on them by the examinee. We get a similar impression from Cotton Mather's depictions of the actual trials before the Court of Oyer and Terminer in his *Wonders of the Invisible World* (1693). As I have suggested earlier (see 3.3.3), these "performances" were likely part of a semiotic network of resources that was integral for many of the accusers and witnesses in establishing their position as core members in the Salem CoP and central actors in the trial process more generally.

In some ways, these often over-the-top performances are mimicked by textual features in the depositions. Among the stance strategies used by the Salem deponents and the recorders of their testimonies, "degree modifiers" are probably the most expressive and representative examples of such "textual histrionics." As the label "degree modifiers" suggests, these features generally speaking allow users to "describe the extent to which a characteristic holds" (Biber et al. 1999: 554). The use of such degree modification in the Salem depositions is sometimes very striking, as illustrated in (1). In April of 1692, the deposition excerpted in (1) was filed against the farmer John Procter with the authorities in Salem, on behalf of Ann Putnam

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1.   The chapter title quote comes from *RSWH*, no. 136.

Jr., one of the most dogged accusers of alleged witches. In it, Ann Jr. makes clear that she was not only tortured, but *most dreadfully* and *most grievously* tortured; she was not simply afflicted, but afflicted *very much*.

> (1)
> then he sett upon me **most greviviously** and did tortor me **most dreadfully** also in the time of his Examination he afflected me **very much**: and seuerall times sence the Apperishtion of John procktor sen[r] has **most greviously** tortored me by pinching and **allmost** choaking me urging me **vehemently** to writ in his book also on the day of his Examination I saw the Apperishtion of Jn[o] proctor sen[r] goe and affleet and **most greviously** tortor the bodyes of Mistris pope mary walcot<t> Mircy lewes Abigail williams and Jno: Indian.   (*RSWH*, no. 59)

The use of degree modification is not always as dense as in Ann Jr.'s deposition and the type of degree modifiers and their functions vary, but their presence in the Salem depositions is difficult to overlook. With these resources, the deponents (and/or the recorders of their testimonies) can accomplish a range of stance-related goals. They signal their assessment or perception of the severity of suffering and their own role as a victim, and they highlight, emphasize, but also downtone aspects of the testimony. In other words, the deponents and recorders often position the evidence as particularly relevant for the proceedings at hand, and stress the alleged actions or results of the actions of the accused; that is, the actionable offences that would help convict the accused as witches. Such positioning was of course crucial for the workings and membership negotiations of the Salem CoP.

This chapter explores the full dynamics of this usage. In doing so, it is by necessity different in some respects from Chapter 5. There I focused on the dynamics of stance in two functional contexts: the central narrative event and the description of the actors (especially the accused and accusers). These contexts of course surface in this chapter as well, as they are central to the depositions and to the use of degree modifiers. But here I take the degree phenomenon as the central guiding principle and explore in more detail the ways in which degree modification is deployed for stance purposes in the Salem depositions. In other words, the functional context here is where degree is expressed, and I explore some local dynamics of such usage: I am concerned with the "intensification" (downtoning as well as boosting) of the experiences that the depositions record.

After reviewing some of the literature on degree modification and some of the methodological challenges of studying these features in 6.2, the chapter provides a global view of degree modification in the corpus of Salem depositions as a whole in 6.3.1. These trends are then analyzed in detail in the context of the different types of modifiers, different groups of witnesses and recorders, and their contextual, sociopragmatic employment of degree modifiers (6.3.2–6.3.5).

6.2   Degree modifiers: Background and methodology

Degree modifiers in English have been studied from a range of perspectives and under a number of completely or partially overlapping labels ("intensifiers," "boosters," "amplifiers," "minimizers," "downtoners," etc.); and several (related) frameworks have been developed to describe the varied set of degree modifiers or the nature of degree modification (e.g., Bolinger 1972; Labov 1984; Quirk et al. 1985: 589–603; Biber et al 1999: 554–556, 564–569; Mittwoch, Huddleston, and Collins 2002: 720–725; Paradis 2008; see also the overview in Claridge and Kytö 2021b). Particular attention has been paid to adverbs functioning as degree modifiers, such as *very*, *really*, and *so* (among many others, Stoffel 1901; Borst 1902; Bäcklund 1973; Partington 1993; Peters 1993, 1994; Lorenz 2002; Méndez-Naya 2008; Méndez-Naya and Pahta 2010; Ito and Tagliamonte 2003; Tagliamonte 2008; D'Arcy 2015; Reichelt and Durham 2017; Claridge and Kytö 2021b). These studies have demonstrated the great range of adverbs and other features that have taken on a degree-modifying function, their fluctuation diachronically, and the continual renewal of degree modifiers: as one expression loses emphatic force, another gains it.

My interest here is obviously less in how the Salem depositions can inform our understanding of the general development of degree modifiers, but more in how they were used in this sociohistorical setting for particular communicative, stance-related purposes. Their pragmatic and social potentials have of course received attention (e.g., Bäcklund 1973: 158; Partington 1993: 178; Martin 2000: 148; Hyland 2005; Reichelt and Durham 2017). Within studies of stance, degree modifiers are sometimes mentioned (e.g., Thompson and Hunston 2000: 21), but little stance-related research seems to focus on them (see Hyland 2005: 52–53;[2] Martin and White 2005: 137–150).

My study of the Salem depositions differ in some respects from earlier studies. This is of course by necessity since my aim here is different from that of many other investigations of intensifiers. As hinted above, the majority of research on degree modification deals with adverbs, perhaps because the focus has been on the grammaticalization and the constant renewal of degree modification features. Here, I consider other features as well that can have degree modification functions, including adjectives (e.g., *great*, *extreme*), determiners (e.g., *much*), and prepositional phrases (e.g., *in a most dreadful manner*) (Bolinger 1972; Mittwoch, Huddleston, and Collins 2002: 555, 720–724; Paradis 2008; contributions in Claridge and Kytö 2021a). While adverbs are certainly the most frequent degree modifiers in the Salem depositions, it is important to consider the full range of modifers to get a more

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2.   Note that Hyland (2005) includes degree modifiers in the larger category of "boosters."

extensive view of how they are deployed for various stance purposes in the Salem depositions.

Several challenges emerge in identifying and classifying degree modifiers. Previous research has demonstrated that there is a certain amount of overlap and substantial gray areas among expressions of degree, manner, quantity/size, and related notions (e.g., Bolinger 1972; Bäcklund 1973: 8–10; Quirk et al. 1985: 602–604; Mittwoch, Huddleston, and Collins 2002: 720–721; Hasselgård 2010: 31–34, 249; Ghesquière 2021). A significant number of expressions can signal both manner and degree or both quantity/size and degree, while others show an inextricable merging of the two, though the degree, manner, or quantity/size component may be stronger in certain contexts. The overlap and ambiguity is certainly present in the Salem depositions. Examples (2)–(4) illustrate some of the distinctions and complexities in the data.

> (2)
> yᵉ sᵈ John saw a **Great** light appear in yᵉ sᵈ chamber   (*RSWH*, no. 14)
>
> (3)
> she run out of the meeting-house from the Sacrament in a **great** rage
>   (*RSWH*, no. 343)
>
> (4)
> I saw the Apperishtion of Sarah osborn the wife of Ꝫ Allexandar osborn who did Immediatly tortor me **most greviously** by pinching and pricking me **dreadfully** and so she continewed **most dreadfully** to afflect me tell the first day of march being the day of hir Examination and then also she did tortor me **most dreadfully** in the time of hir Examination: (*RSWH*, no. 11)

Examples (2) and (3) reflect quantity/size and degree respectively. While "Great light" refers to the physical size of the light, "great rage" refers to the intensity (or "degree") of the rage. Indeed, the size/quantity and degree readings are often separable by considering the concrete or abstract nature of the noun. Examples like (2) were not included in this chapter, while (3) and others of this kind were. (For discussion of quantity and frequency as stance-related, see 8.2.)

Example (4) is slightly more complicated. *Most grievously* and *most dreadfully* could be interpreted as manner adverbs, in the sense of 'in a very grievous way' and 'in a way that inspires dread,' or they can be seen as degree modifiers signaling 'to a grievous extent' and 'to a dreadful degree.' This ambiguity is similarly reflected by many examples of these two adverbs cited by the *OED* (s.vv. *grievously* and *dreadfully*), and, as pointed out by the compilers in the dictionary entries, significant overlap between manner and degree is often evident. This is especially the case when these adverbs co-occur with "words implying hurt, harm, wrong, etc." (*OED*, s.v. *grievously*), which is overwhelmingly the case in the Salem material. From a

pragmatic perspective, whether the degree or manner meaning is stronger in any individual case, the expression adjusts the meaning of the modified word (here the verbs TORTURE and AFFLICT), highlighting an intensification: the victim was not simply tortured, but *most grievously* tortured (whether in manner or extent). Either way, they are of course stance features, but since they seem to be intimately connected to the upscaling and emphasizing of the degree of affliction, I consider them in this chapter.

Indeed, the pragmatic, contextual value of the intensification or downtoning of an aspect or characteristic is a crucial factor in understanding degree modification in the Salem depositions (as it is for stance in general). I have included some features whose degree modification function is highly dependent on context. An illustrative example of such a contextual use is the phrase *in my heart*, exemplified in 5 (see also 4.2.2).

> (5)
> I beleue **in my heart** that Rebecka Jacobs is a wicth   (*RSWH*, no. 172)

Here, the phrase emphasizes the extent to which the deponent (Elizabeth Hubbard) believed in the guilt of Rebecca Jacobs. This *I believe* formula is particularly significant phrase in the Salem records, as I argue in 7.3.4, and stressing that the nature of the belief or conviction is deep-seated was crucial in making the case for the guilt of the alleged witch. Again, the positioning of the deponent as a central and strong witness and hence a person with a central role for the CoP is evident in this context (see 6.3.2.8 for further discussion of this phrase).

Some studies, especially within sociolinguistics, attempt to chart the use of degree modifiers not only across contexts in which they occur but also in contexts where they might have occurred but did not (e.g., Ito and Tagliamonte 2003: 263–264; D'Arcy 2015: 457–460; see also 7.2). While such an approach is potentially revelatory for determining what factors encourage or discourage the use of modifiers, it is difficult to operationalize, especially in a corpus of historical materials. Furthermore, studies that adopt this approach limit their focus to adverbs modifying adjectives, which simplifies the process of identifying non-uses, but does not wholly eliminate many of the problems inherent in the approach. I have not attempted this kind of charting systematically, since this approach would entail many subjective judgments about whether a degree modifier is possible in any given context. But I show in 6.3.2.9 that it can be revealing for our understanding of stance moves to compare in a limited way contexts where degree modification occurs and where it does not occur.

Degree modification falls into a number of different types. While most studies focus on degree modifiers that scale upwards (also known as "amplifiers," "boosters," "multals," etc., such as *very*, *terribly*, and *really*), degree modifiers can express

a range of degrees (e.g., Quirk et al. 1985: 589–603; Biber et al 1999: 554–556, 564–569; Mittwoch, Huddleston, and Collins 2002: 720–725; Paradis 2008; Claridge and Kytö 2021a). I draw on the classificatory framework suggested by Mittwoch, Huddleston, and Collins (2002: 721–724), illustrated and exemplied in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Classification of degree modifiers (Adapted from Mittwoch, Huddleston, and Collins 2002: 721–724)

Category	Explanation	Salem example
Maximal	Degree at the top end of a scale	I am **thorowly** healed (*RSWH*, no. 468)
Multal	Degree ranging from the midpoint to near the top end of a scale	s^d Puddeater did: afflict<e> me **greatly** (*RSWH*, no. 555)
Moderate	A moderate degree	my wife has ben **tolorable** well (*RSWH*, no. 637)
Paucal	A small degree	I came home **a litil** afore night (*RSWH*, no. 321)
Minimal	A very small degree, often negative	my housband and I could **hardly** hold it (*RSWH*, no. 334)
Approximating	A degree very close to a certain level	they ꞙ remaned in this sad Condition of being **allmost** Choked to death (*RSWH*, no. 601)
Relative	Degree relative to some other situation	I tooke **most** notice of his legs (*RSWH*, no. 449)

As we shall see, the frequency and function of these categories vary significantly in the Salem depositions, and considering different functional types and contexts is key for understanding how they were employed by the deponents and the recorders of their testimonies for particular stance moves.

6.3   The nature of degrees

6.3.1 Overall patterns of degree modification in the Salem depositions

Table 6.2 gives an overview of the degree modification use in the Salem depositions. The picture is telling. Multal modifiers (expressing degrees ranging from the midpoint to near the top end of a scale) dominate at 77% of all the modifiers. These modifiers include among many others: *great*, *greatly*, *much*, *very*, *verily*, *grievous*, *grievously*, *sore*, *sorely*, *horribly*, and *in my heart*. A perhaps surprising second are the Approximating modifiers, which signal a degree close to a certain level. As we shall see in 6.3.4, there are particular reasons for this pattern related to the use of

Table 6.2 Categories of degree modification

Category	N (%)
Multal	751 (77%)
Approximating	144 (15%)
Maximal	30 (3%)
Paucal	27 (3%)
Minimal	10 (1%)
Multal (Negative)	6 (<1%)
Moderate	3 (<1%)
Relative	3 (>1%)
Maximal (Negative)	2 (<1%)
Ambiguous	5 (<1%)
Total	981 (100%)

almost in a recurring context. Maximal (indicating the top end of the scale) and paucal (indicating a small degree) modifiers are infrequent, with examples such as *full*, *fully*, *wholly*, *absolutely* and *a little*, *little*, respectively. The remaining categories are rare at one percent and below: minimal (e.g., *hardly*, *just*), moderate (e.g., *quite*, *somewhat*), and relative (*more…than*). Negative multals and maximals, which are similarly rare, stress that the degree of the characteristic does not pertain to the extent expressed by the modifier, as in (6). Indeed, the negation here makes the modifer more similar to a paucal modifier.[3]

> (6)
> shee seeming not well afected sd that a {or som} shee divel woold fech him away ~~in a short time~~ shortly at wch this deponent was **not much** moved   (*RSWH*, no. 374)

Three of the ambiguous examples involve *pretty*, where it is not clear whether the modifier should be read as a multal or as a moderate. In (7), we could interpret the meaning as 'fairly hard' or as 'very hard,' and the context does not conclusively point in either direction. Such ambiguity is not unusual for *pretty* (e.g., *OED*, s.v. *pretty* adv.; Peters 1993: 188; Nevalainen and Rissanen 2002: 369; Claridge and Kytö 2014: 38–40; Reichelt and Durham 2017: 65).

> (7)
> ther did arise a litle blak cloud in the: n: w and a few drops of Raine and the wind blew **prity** hard   (*RSWH*, no. 160)

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3. Studies of degree modification often exclude negated examples from consideration, as their dynamics are said to be slightly different (e.g., Ito and Tagliamonte 2003: 264). As they are rare in the Salem depositions, not much can be said about their usage.

I explore these patterns below in more detail, but it is clear that when degree is expressed it is usually towards the upper end of a scale; in other words, the strength or degree is emphasized. That does not mean of course that downtowning or expressing a small degree is not pragmatically potent in some contexts. But, overall, the picture fits well in with the notion of textual histrionics, as I noted in 6.1.

6.3.2 Multal modifiers

6.3.2.1 *Overall patterns*

Multal modifiers, which scale a property, characteristic, or action upwards, is the most common category of degree modifiers, with 751 instances (or 77% of the total number of degree modifiers). Not surprisingly, this is also where we find the greatest range of modifying expressions, as shown in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 Multal expressions

Multal	N (%)
Grievously	227 (30%)
Very	127 (17%)
Dreadfully	53 (7%)
Verily	42 (6%)
Much	39 (5%)
In…heart	38 (5%)
Great	31 (4%)
Dreadful	28 (4%)
Vehemently	20 (3%)
Very much	16 (2%)
Greatly	16 (2%)
Violent	15 (2%)
Well	13 (2%)
Others	86 (11%)
Total	751 (100%)

The table highlights that thirteen markers represent as many as 665 instances or 89%, while some 40 types make up 86 instances or 11%. Among the most common markers are well-known degree modifiers such as *very*, *much*, *very much*,[4] *great*,

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4.   I have treated *very much* as a unit rather than as two separable items. There seem to be no difference in degree-modying value between *much* and *very much*, and they are often found in the same context (e.g., *very much afflicted* vs. *much afflicted*). The use of the phrase as an intensificatory unit appears to have been established in the early modern period (González-Díaz 2008: 225–226; also Bolinger 1972: 215–218).

greatly, and *well*. These are deployed in a range of contexts and modify a broad range of expressions. However, the top group also includes a number of expressions whose degree-modification value is highly context dependent and whose meaning over-laps with or partakes of other related meanings, as discussed in 6.2. These include *grievously*, *dreadfully*, *dreadful*, *in…heart*, *vehemently*, and *violent*. These markers are also more constrained than the former group in terms of the situations in which they are found, as will be evident from the subsequent analysis. A notable feature of the form of two of these multals, *grievously* and *dreadfully*, is that they are almost exclusively (242 out of 280 examples, 86%) used in combination with *most*, as in (8).

> (8)
> The Deposistion of Thomas putnam agged 40 years and Jnᵒ putnam aged 36 years who testifieth and saith that we haueing ben conversant with diuers of the af-flected parsons as mary walcott mercy lewes Abigail williams and Ann putnam and Elizabeth Hubburt and haue seen them **most greviously** tormented and often complaining of John proctor for hurting them also on the 11th of Aprill 1692 be-ing the day of John proctors Examination the affore named parsons ware much af affected \<me\> dureing the time of his Examination: also seuerall times sence we haue seen the affore said parsons **most dreadfully** affle\<ct\>ed   (*RSWH*, no. 60)

In these examples, *most* must be taken in the sense of 'very' (or possibly 'extremely') adding an intensification to the multal, rather than in the relative sense of indicat-ing that it is the most grievous torments of all experienced in this context or in the world more broadly (Claridge 2006: 78–79; Quirk et al. 1985: 590). Indeed, *most* can be seen as a multal itself (or maximal). Since it exclusively appears together with these two forms (with such persistent frequency), I have not classified it separately, as it would inflate the figures.

There is no doubt about the function of this combination. Although *grievously* and *dreadfully* are strong modifers in themselves, they are not seen as adequate or expressive enough to capture the alleged tortures and afflictions. Instead, the experi-ences have to be further underscored. *Most grievously* and *most dreadfully* are by and large restricted to certain users, especially the core group of accusers. (It is no coin-cidence that example 8 is from a deposition penned by Thomas Putnam for himself and John Putnam describing their observations of some core accusers; see further below.) These multal phrases add to the picture of the textual histrinics where the experiences of particular accusers and alleged sufferers of witchcraft attacks are promoted, matching in linguistic and textual terms their performances in the courtroom as they fell into drawn-out fits and cried out against spectral afflictions.

Although multals are found throughout the Salem depositions, there are certain persistent narrative contexts where they are particularly common. Table 6.4 gives an overview of these contexts.

Table 6.4 Narrative contexts and multal modifiers

Narrative Contexts	N (%)
Witchcraft (affliction)	388 (51.5%)
Mental faculties	102 (13.5%)
Mental properties	65 (9%)
Physical states	57 (8%)
Measurements	42 (5.5%)
Speech acts	42 (5.5%)
Actions and behaviors	29 (4%)
Physical appearance	15 (2%)
Other	11 (1%)
Total	751 (100%)

Descriptions of witchcraft (especially affliction; cf. 5.3.1.2) is the context *par excellence* for multals, and many of the other categories also deal, though more indirectly, with the deponents' experiences or reactions with alleged encounters with witches or mysterious encounters with unexplained phenomena or creatures (see also Chapter 8). In itself, this is hardly a revelation since witchcraft is the main concern of all the depositions and of the trial proceedings in general. But looking at the patterns within these categories will help reveal how the deponents and the recorders used multals strategically to position the evidence and themselves more specifically.

6.3.2.2 *Physical appearance*

Among narrative contexts that are below 10% of the instances, some categories reveal some general notable patterns while others show no clear overall patterns but still point to more localized dynamics. In descriptions of physical appearance, we see descriptions of aspects of nature (9), of the weather (10), and of bodily ailments (11).

> (9)
> as soon as Euer she s[d] Rachall Herd them words: she Run out Adors: and I followed hur as herd as I could & when I Came to the Dore I Could see nothing of hur: & it was a **uery** Cler mone light night   (*RSWH*, no. 43)

> (10)
> some time in the spring of the year<s> about Eighteen years since {Su}sanna Martin came vnto our house att Newbury from Amsbury in an **Extraordinary** dirty season w[n] itt was nott ffitt ffor any P̃son to travell she then came on foot, w[n] shee came into our ["our" written over "my s"] house I asked her whether she came ffrom Amsbury ["A" written over "a"] affoot she say'd she did I asked how she could come in this time affoott and bid my children make way ffor her to come to the fire to dry her

selfe she replyed she was as dry as I was and turn'd her Coats on side, and I could
nott ℞ceive thatt the soule of her shews were wett I was startled att itt. y^t she should
come soe dry and told her thatt I should have been weett up to my knees If I should
have come so ffarr on ffoott. shee replyd thatt she scorn'd to have a drabled tayle

(*RSWH*, no. 356)

(11)

when I came There ye mare was in such a Condition y^t I Could not tell w^t she ailed
for I neuer sawe ye Like her Lips ware **Excedingly** swelled y^t ye Incides of Them
Turned outward & Looked Black & blew & gelled   (*RSWH*, no. 396)

These instances may seem unremarkable but in the contexts that they are found they
particularly stress the contrast between what is clearly perceived as a normal state
of affairs and the situation that obtains in the particular circumstances depicted in
the testimony. There appears to be an underlying claim in these descriptions, em-
phasized with the help of the multals: only supernatural forces could explain what
happened. Interestingly, however, this claim usually remains unarticulated in the
deposition, and instead the formulation relies on the audience making the appro-
priate inferences (for more discussion, see 8.4). In (9), how could the deponent not
see Clinton despite the very clear moonlight? There must be unnatural reasons. In
(10), how could Martin come to their house without wet shoes and a soiled skirt
in such "an Extraordinary dirty season"? Again, supernatural reasons seem to be
the implied, "obvious" answer. Finally, in (11), if a horse that has previously been
spoken for by but denied to an alleged witch is in such an unexplained condition
(with lips "Excedingly" bloated), what is one to assume other than some kind of
involvement by witchcraft? Indeed, the fact that they were submitted in evidence
speaks to the unarticulated claim that they are relevant to the legal cases at hand
(Grund 2020a). These depositions all rely on inference rather than direct evidence,
and they boost their case by strategically emphasizing a key part of the basis of the
inference.

6.3.2.3   *Actions and behaviors*

As the label would suggest, the category contains a wide range of expressions per-
taining to the actions and behaviors of the accused, accusers, deponents, and others.
We find an equally broad range of modified expressions: verbs (*pull*, *run down*),
adjectives (*strange*, *bad*), adverbs (*strangely*, *spitefully*), and nouns (*disturbance*).
These are modified by a broad spectrum of multals, dominated by *very*, and fol-
lowed by more infrequent options (e.g., *great*, *greatly*, *much*, *exceeding*). With so
much variety, it is difficult to draw general conclusions about the category as such.
However, there are some notable places where multals help to underscore the de-
ponents' favorable or unfavorable attitude towards an accused. Examples (12) and
(13) represent typical instances of such usage.

(12)

ever since, which is about two Years 1/2 agone; the said Sarah Good, ~~hath~~ {~~not~~} [1–2 words overstruck] ~~to the s^d deponents hat~~<?> hath carried it **very** Spitefully & Mallitiously, toward them, […] ever since these Dponants turned ∧{her} out of their howse she hath ~~carried~~ behaveed her selfe **very** crossely & Mallitiously, to them & their Children calling their Chillren Vile Names and hath threetened them often./.

(*RSWH*, no. 352)

(13)

for ~~my~~ ∧{ouer} oun partes. ~~I~~ ∧{we} haue bin ~~a~~ well aquainted w^t hur for aboue twenty yeers ~~I~~ ∧{we} neuer see but y^t she cared it **uery** wel   (*RSWH*, no. 318)

Both excerpts reveal the stance towards an accused, evaluating their behavior (cf. *OED*, s.v. *carry* 22b). Mary and Samuel Abbey stress Sarah Good's malicious behavior against them after they refused her lodging, in (12). Indeed, they return to very similar wording at the end of their deposition (the second instance in the excerpt) in their obvious disapproval of her demeanor and actions. In (13), on the other hand, Daniel, John, and Sarah Warner endorse the life and practices of Elizabeth How, an accused. Here "cared it uery well" acts as a summative phrase to give their long-term perspective on How's behavior, based on over twenty years' acquaintance. They then go on to elaborate on her virtues in the testimony that follows, but their overall assessment is very clear from the phrase. We of course see here, partially, the importance of stressing the kinds of evaluations of the actors, especially the accused, that we saw in 5.3.2. It is clearly not enough to evaluate negatively or positively: some depositions stress and intensify that evaluation.

6.3.2.4 *Speech acts*

Multals can also modify particular speech act verbs: they emphasize how the speech acts were performed. These multals belong to a set of stance resources that I have elsewhere termed "speech descriptors" (Grund 2017a, 2018a, 2020b). Speech descriptors allow language users to describe an aspect of an alleged speech event that cannot otherwise be easily represented: features such as intonation, pitch, emphasis, etc., in the spoken language cannot be directly and easily illustrated in written language. At the same time, speech descriptors are often (always?) evaluative, enabling the person reporting the speech to add an evaluation of their attitude towards how the speech act was performed and, by extension, the speaker (Du Bois 2007). We see this on display in the Salem materials. Two speech act contexts predominate: *complaining* and *urging*, illustrated in (14) and (15), respectively.

(14)

After which time the sd martin did many tims afterward appear to her {at her} house and did much troubl her in any of her accasions and this continued till about feb: ffollowing: and then when shee did com it was as birds peking her Legs

> or priking her with the mosion of thayr wings and then it woold rise vp into her stumak with priking payn as nayles & pines of wch shee did **bitterly** complain and cry out Lik a woman in trauil (*RSWH*, no. 140)

(15)

> mr Burroughs brought to: me bread to eat and wine to drink which I Refuseing he did most greviously torment me urging me **vehemently** to writ in his book: (*RSWH*, no. 458)

Both examples stress the degree of the complaint and urging. In (14), it is significant that the represented speech is not in direct speech, that is, a purported representation of the exact words as used by the original speaker. It could of course be argued that William Brown, the deponent in (14), did not remember exactly what was said by his wife, whose alleged tortures are being described. If so, he would have been forced to resort to a less detailed description, here a "narrator's representation of speech acts," which focuses on reporting the speech act, a complaint, but provides little information about the form and content of the original speech (Semino and Short 2004: 52). However, it could also be argued that the exact words were not important in this context: what was important is the speech act attributed to his wife (complaining) and his emphasis of how she performed the speech act. Relating her exact words may not have clearly communicated her strong feelings, while Brown's depiction of the complaint as "bitter" allows him to convey his interpretation of the words rather than allow the audience (the legal authorities) to interpret the implication and severity of her experience (cf., Grund 2017a: 52–53; Walker and Grund 2017: 17).

The dynamics in (15) are slightly different. Here we see some further detail about the content of the speech that was delivered *vehemently*. The original speaker allegedly pressed the deponent "to writ in his book," that is, the Devil's book, which was said to contain the marks and signatures of people who had committed their lives to the Devil. This type of speech representation is in indirect speech (Semino and Short 2004: 82). It is significant again that the speech is not in direct speech, but of a more summative kind: the focus is on content, and the delivery of that content rather than on the exact words used. Through *vehemently* (in combination with *urge*), the deponent (and/or recorder) stresses the substantial verbal pressure that the deponent was under, and *vehemently* hints at possible threats and abusive behavior as part of the urging (see 5.3.2). Since the deponent never relents but persists in refusing to sign the book, *vehemently* also conveys the staunch refusal and unimpeachably moral actions of the deponent: even under such hellish pressure, they withstand the accused. *Vehemently*, in other words, serves both to denigrate the accused and glorify the deponent. The *vehemently urge* formulation is by and large restricted to Thomas Putnam's depositions for core accusers.

6.3.2.5 *Measurements*

Multals within the context of measurement (time, distance, frequency, duration, height, weight, volume, etc.) would on the face of it seem not to be related directly to issues of witchcraft or witnesses' positioning of themselves or their evidence. But there are striking patterns in this regard. In as many as 23 instances (the only combination to occur more than three times), *very* modifies *often*, as in (16) and (17).

> (16)
> I beleue in my heart that martha Cory is a most dreadfull wicth and y^t she hath **very often** affletid me a seuerall othrs by hir acts of wicthcraft   (*RSWH*, no. 239)

> (17)
> good bibber wood be **uery often** spekeking against won and nother uery obsanely [= obscenely] and thos things that were uery falls. and wichshing uery bad wichchis and **uery often**   (*RSWH*, no. 365)

Example (16) shows a typical place in the narrative where *very often* occurs. This example highlights that, even though *very* most directly modifies a temporal expression (*often*), *very often* as a phrase is closely connected with larger themes of witchcraft affliction. These phrases are usually found at the end of depositions, incorporated into what I refer to as the *believe* formula. As I argue in 7.3.4, the section involving the *believe* formula is intended as a summation of how the deponent sees his/her experiences, and as a clear statement of the deponent's conviction of the accused's guilt. The phrase *very often* adds an important component to the deponent's accusation. The alleged witch did not only commit acts of witchcraft against the deponent and others once; rather, the attacks were very frequent and persistent. It is part of recurrent behavior, which stresses both the seemingly unrepentant persecution perpetrated by the accused and the deponent's consistent victim status. It is not surprising that these *very often* instances (i.e., in the context of repeated attacks) occur exclusively in the core accusers' depositions (or those of their suporters), adding to the sense that they are trying to fashion themselves as having a particular, exclusive role in the Salem CoP (see 8.2 for a broader discussion of frequency and "vague language").

 The example in (17) illustrates a usage that overlaps with instances like (16), but also shows that *very often* as a phrase could be deployed for slightly different purposes. The two instances of *very often* in (23) bookend several other phrases involving multal modifiers that stress Goody Bibber's behavior (*very obscenely*, *very false*, and *very bad*). This deposition is one of the suite of related depositions (including also *RSWH*, nos. 364, 366, and 367) that I discussed in 5.3.2. They attempt to throw doubt on the reliability and moral character of one of the most insistent accusers, Sarah Bibber (see 8.2). The message is clear: Goody Bibber did not only

behave and speak in reprehensible ways once or twice; rather, these are repeated acts. What we see here is an attempt to discredit an accuser, with some of the very same linguistic means and tactics that are so common in depositions by the core and associated accusers. The same resources could thus be used both to align and disalign with the Salem CoP, showing the contextual negotiation of stance (see 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 8.5).

6.3.2.6 *Physical states*

The category of "physical states" refers to descriptions of people's or animals' physical well-being, and includes degree modification of adjectives such as *bad*, *ill*, *drooping*, *miserable*, *painful*, *sad*, and *sick*, as well as nouns including *pain* and *torment*, as in (18) and (19). This category is obviously mostly found in the narratives of disease, death, strangeness, and fright that I delineated in 5.3.1.1.

> (18)
> at or very near this tyme ~~aft~~ oʳ Eldest Child who promised as much health & vnderstand{ing} both by Countenance and actions as any other Children of his years: was taken in a **very** drooping Condition   (*RSWH*, no. 279)

> (19)
> I continued so in **greivous** pain   (*RSWH*, no. 488)

It should be clear from the modified words cited above and in examples (18) and (19) that physical states are predominantly emphasized in a negative way. As we already saw in 5.3.1.1, even on the rare occasion when a more positive physical aspect is described, it is always to contrast with some other unfavorable condition, usually to stress the severe and unexpected current circumstances, as in (20).

> (20)
> Samuel Preston aged about 41: years saith yᵗ about 2 yeares since I had some difference wᵗʰ Martha Carrier wᶜʰ also had hapened seuerˡˡ Times before and soon after I lost a Cow in a strange manner being Cast vpon her back wth her heels vp in firm ground when she was **very** Lusty   (*RSWH*, no. 466)

Here the strange manner of the death of Preston's cow is contrasted with her very vigorous ("Lusty"; *OED*, s.v. *lusty*) condition. As in many other depositions that describe physical ailments and loss of cattle, the accusation against an alleged witch and the evidential basis of the claim of affliction is indirect and inferential. That is, a deponent highlights having "some difference" with an accused and then catalogues various personal ailments or mysterious attacks against or death of cattle. While the allegation is clear enough, the connection that the accused would have caused those maladies is surprisingly often left implicit, leaving the audience (that

is, the legal authorities) to draw inferences (cf., the earlier discussion of the related "physical appearance" in 6.3.2.2;[5] see also Grund 2020a). It would be tempting to suggest that deponents did not wish to make a direct accusation as they did not possess direct evidence of the accused's involvement. However, even if that were the case, there is no doubt where the deponent stands, and degree modifiers help make that clear. In (20), despite the cow's *very* vigorous condition, it inexplicably ended up dead; in (18), despite the child's perceived health, he languished "in a *very* drooping Condition."

6.3.2.7 *Mental properties*
The mid-level frequency categories "mental properties" (9%) and "mental faculties" (13.5%) are obviously related in that multal modifiers are used in connection with descriptions of deponents' (or others') mental preoccupations. However, they also differ considerably in that examples within "mental properties" focus on mental states and examples of "mental faculties" describe cognitive verbal actions (often in contexts of evidentiality or source-marking; see 6.3.2.8).

In many respects, the examples in the mental properties category represent a non-physical counterpart to "physical states," with modified words such as *affright(ed)*, *fright*, *afraid*, *anger*, *angry*, *disturbed*, *composed*, *careful*, *dutiful*, *bad*, *rational*, *sensible*, *turbulent*, *(un)willing* (among others). As such, they also relate to the narratives of disease, death, strangeness, and fright discussed in 5.3.1.1. We find a clear separation between contexts in which the deponent decribes his or her own mental state and those where the deponent purports to depict the mental state of others. In the former, the descriptions where multal modifiers are used almost exclusively focus on fear. The most commonly modified word is *affright(ed)*, as in (21).

> (21)
> Immediatly after I satt down in a Narrow Bar and did see a black thing Jump into ye window and came & stood Just before my face, vpon ye bar ye body of itt looked like a Munky only ye feete ware ∧{like} a Cocks feete wth Claws and ye face somewhat more like a mans y^n a Munkies. and I being **greatly affrighted** not being able to speake or help my selfe by Reason of feare I suppose, soe the thing spake to mee and said I am a Messenger sent to y^u for I vnderstand you are trobled in mind, and if you will be Ruled by mee you shall want for Nothing in this world
> (*RSWH*, no. 278)

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5.   Some examples from the categories of "physical states" and "physical appearance" are closely related, as they can both deal with physical ailments. However, the latter category comprises general descriptions of diseases, death, and overall health status, and it is not always clear that the description of those aspects is based on physical appearance. Physical appearance examples, on the other hand, deal with directly observable aspects.

Affright(*ed*) is modified ten times, by *much*, *very much*, *greatly*, and *most greviously*, and is thus by far the most modified word in this category (no other word is modified more than four times). It is striking that only four instances of *affright*(*ed*) in the whole of the corpus of Salem depositions are unmodified. Clearly, simply expressing fear was not enough; rather, to properly capture their feelings, or, indeed, to emphasize the fright they felt, the deponents (or recorders of their testimonies) boosted their description with the help of multal modifers. Whether consciously intended or not, these modifications helped to bring home the terror that the deponent allegedly experienced and the deponent's status as a victim, perhaps to elicit sympathy but also to further stress the accused's guilt. What is also stressed is the importance of the accusation for the running of the CoP. In (21), this emphasis goes hand in hand with the dramatization of the encounter with supernatural entities through the representation of direct conversation with mysterious creatures (or, in other contexts, with deceased community members or alleged witches), discussed in detail in 7.3.4.

The contexts in which the mental state of people other than the deponent is described are more varied in character, and the nature of the descriptions of course differs fundamentally from those that depict the deponents' own mental properties. While deponents could give an informed sense of their own response to certain events in terms of their state of mind (whether truthful or not), their access to other people's feelings and cognitive processes rests on much less solid ground. Indeed, it is mostly unclear how exactly the deponents knew the level of fear, anger, willingness, etc. of a second party. One must assume that they inferred them from some unstated external evidence (such as facial expressions, body language, language, or other factors), but the evidential basis is mostly unexpressed. In other words, we are dealing with mental properties *ascribed to* but not necessarily possessed by a person. A person's state of mind and character can be of considerable significance in arguments both against and in support of an accused, as seen in (22) and (23). This ties in well with some depositions' concern with evaluating the actors in the trials, as we saw in 5.3.2.

> (22)
> shee presently replied but does shee tell you what cloathes I have on we made her no answer <?> to this at her first asking where upon shee asked us again [2nd "a" written over "i"] with **very great eagernes** but does shee tell you what cloathes I have on.
> at which questions with that eagernes of mind. with ["i" written over "e"] which shee did askes made us to thinke of what An Putnum had told us before we went to her. to which and wee told her no shee did not for shee told us that you came and blinded her and told her that shee should see you no more before it was night that so shee might not tell us what cloathes you had on. <?> shee made but litle answer to this but seemed to smile at it as if shee had showed us a pretty trick
>
> (*RSWH*, no. 18)

(23)

> she hath caried it well becoming her place as a daughter as a wife in all Relation
> seting aside humain infurmitys as becometh a Christion with Respact to my self
> as a father **very dutyfully** & a wifife to my son **uery Carfull loueing obediant and
> kind** Considering his want of eye sight tenderly leading him about by the hand
>
> (*RSWH*, no. 341)

The deposition extract in (22) comes from Edward Putnam's and Ezekiel Cheever's testimony concerning their visit with Martha Cory after she had been accused of witchcraft by Ann Putnam Jr. The phrase *with very great eagerness* is doubly marked: the multal *very* marks the multal *great*, and *very great* in turn modifies *eagerness*. The phrase (*with very great eagerness*) serves as a speech descriptor (see 6.2.2.4), which adds an assessment of how the speech act of asking was performed, though here the marker also purports to give us insight into the speaker's state of mind.[6] Since the deponents could not access Cory's psyche, *with very great eagerness* represents an evaluation whose basis remains unclear. The description may rely on actions, manner of speaking, or other features. If it is an accurate assessment of Cory's speech and behavior, it can be interpreted in two ways. Both require some context. At the beginning of the deposition, the deponents note asking Ann Putnam Jr. to pay attention to what clothes Cory is wearing when she afflicts Ann Jr. so that they could verify that Ann Jr. has identified the right person. Ann Jr. responds that the person persecuting her says that her name is Cory but that she blinds her so that she cannot identify Cory by sight and hence by clothing. This is what the deposition extract in (22) refers to when it relates Ann Jr.'s comment about blinding. If the eagerness that the deponents sensed was true, it may reflect Cory's belief that she had found a way to throw some doubt on the truthfulness of Ann's accusation. If she can't tell what clothes I'm wearing, is she perhaps just making it up? Or is it perhaps some other person? However, the deponents clearly perceive the alleged eagerness differently. They appear to see it as confirming Ann Jr.'s claim about blinding: Cory was well aware of what she had done to Ann Jr. and simply made a point of bringing it up, knowing full well that she would not be able to recognize Cory's clothes. (One wonders why she would have blinded Ann Jr., but still insisted on telling Ann Jr. her name, but that point remains unexplored in the deposition.) Cory's resulting smile after this exchange is again interpreted negatively by the deponents, as if "shee had showed [them] a pretty trick." But if we interpret it from Cory's point of view, it may simply have been a wry smile (a facial "touché"), a result of her realizing that her attempt to outwit the accuser had been anticipated and thwarted (cf. Schiff 2015: 75–76). For the deponents, the phrase *very great eagerness* clearly holds a great

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6.   For a discussion of the difference between markers such as *vehemently* in *urged vehemently* and *with great eagerness* in *asked with great eagerness*, see Grund (2017a: 58, 60–61).

deal of significance and is noted and emphasized as *very great* with the intention of reflecting badly on the accused.

In (23), on the other hand, we see 94-year-old James How Sr. fighting back against accusations leveled against his daughter-in-law, Elizabeth How, by stressing her moral character and her attitude toward himself and his blind son (her husband). Here the attribution is presumably based on many years' (30, as noted in the deposition) observation of Elizabeth's behavior, actions, and speech. He does not mention her alleged crimes explicitly, but instead foregrounds her virtues, underscored by the help of the multals. As I argued in 5.3.2, the enumeration of character traits of this kind are intended to stand in clear contradistinction to the witchcraft practices that accusers have ascribed to her, practices that would seem to be a testament to a completely different personality. By using *very*, the deposition further stresses that distinction, perhaps also to counteract the very frequent use of multal degree modifiers in the accusers' narratives (see 6.3.2.9). It is also a clear positioning act where James aligns very clearly with Elizabeth, in his positive evaluation of her character, but also signals, indirectly, but no less clearly, his disalignment with the accusers (Du Bois 2007; for more discussion, see 8.5).

6.3.2.8 *Mental faculties*

The "mental faculties" category involves multals that stress the extent to which a cognitive process holds. That is, they illustrate the degree of the conviction, belief, knowledge of the deponent or other parties, and similar notions. The words modified are primarily verbs such as BELIEVE, JUDGE, THINK, and KNOW, but also related nouns, including NOTICE and THOUGHT. The predominant multal modifier in this category is *verily* (x42), *in…heart* (x35), and, a distant third, *well* (x10). The prominence of the first two multals is the result of a strong collocational pattern of *verily* and *in…heart* with BELIEVE (and, to a more limited extent, with THINK), as demonstrated in (24)–(27).

> (24)
> I **uerily** beleue she bewicthed me (*RSWH*, no. 339)
>
> (25)
> I beleue **in my heart** that mr George Burroughs is a dreadfull wizzard
> (*RSWH*, no. 121)
>
> (26)
> I **veryly** beleue **in my heart** that Sarah Buckly is a wicth (*RSWH*, no. 171)
>
> (27)
> s^d Warin **verily**: thinks: s^d George Jacobs is a wizard ["wizard" written over "witch"]
> (*RSWH*, no. 480)

I argue in detail in 7.3.4 that this formulation (the "*believe* formula") was a crucial component in arguing for an accused's guilt. Although it appeals to belief and hence a deponent's subjective judgment rather than to directly observable "facts," this evaluation, which usually appears at the very end of a deposition, arguably carried a great deal of weight. It seems to have been deployed consciously to convince the authorities that the evidence mattered, that it was crucial for convicting an alleged witch, and, by extension, that the witness was central to the case at hand (see also 5.2). What the multals do here is of course to attempt to further highlight and strengthen the case. It is not simply belief, but an emphatic belief, one that is deeply held (cf. *OED*, s.v. *verily*).

It is very likely that the phrase *verily believe in my heart* was carefully chosen to bring up religious connections. Romans 10:9 (Bible, Authorized version, 1611) state: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt **believe in thine heart** that god hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (my emphasis). The Salem documents are rife with religious discourse (Grund et al. 2009: 83–84), and the spiritual dimension of witchcraft is a common theme around the trials and the writings associated with it, as the Puritans saw themselves as beset by the Devil and his minions (see 1.3; cf. Doty 2018: 28–31). The echo here of Romans would no doubt suggest to the authorities that the deponents put their claims of conviction on the same plane as their religious convictions. This must have made the deponents' statements seem very strong indeed. At the same time, a phrase like this demonstrates the deponents' alignment with community values based in the Bible, which of course would have been directly opposite to values ascribed to witches, who were seen as having rejected the Christian faith and aligned with its greatest enemy, the Devil.

The case of *verily* is similar in that it appears also to have religious community connections. *Verily* occurs regularly in the Bible, especially in speech attributed to Christ in the Gospel of John (e.g., John 5:25, 6:32) in the phrase *Verily, verily I say.…* Adamson (2021) has even suggested that *verily* had become associated with the Puritans in the seventeenth century, and was possibly seen as an in-group marker. The *believe* formula as a whole may thus be carefully calibrated to tap into and align with religious-communal values.

As discussed in more detail in 7.3.4, this emphatic formula is very much associated with depositions written by Thomas Putnam, but it is also found in depositions written by others (especially Simon Willard, though *think* is often used in his depositions, as seen in 27, instead of *believe*).

6.3.2.9 *Witchcraft*

Considering the nature of the depositions and their overall purpose, it is hardly surprising to find a majority (388, or 51.5%) of the multals in descriptions that directly deal with witchcraft. More specifically, they are frequently used in contexts where the deponents narrate their own alleged experiences with affliction by witches or the observation of others so afflicted, as exemplified in (28). The category is thus a little broader than the affliction narratives discussed in 5.3.1.2, but the overlap is significant, in terms of scope and usage.

> (28)
> Eliz: Hubbard, Mary Warren & Ann Putman & John Indian were **exceedingly**
> tortured   (*RSWH*, no. 176)

There are distinct patterns within this category on many different levels. Although some twenty-five different multals are used in this descriptive context, only four occur more than ten times. The picture is very much dominated by *grievously* (x213, or 53% of the multals in this category), followed by *dreadfully* (x49), *dreadful* (x28), and *much* (x17). Together, these four multals represent 307 instances or 79% of the usage in this context.

The insistent use of multals in combination with certain verbs is also striking, and especially the verbs that were highlighted for stance work in themselves in 5.3.1.2. The verbs AFFLICT, TORMENT, and TORTURE dominate with 118, 97, and 65 instances, respectively, representing in all as many as 280 (72%) of the 388 examples. No other modified word comes remotely close to these figures. And the patterns are even further circumscribed. Of the 280 examples, 237 occur with two modifiers: *grievously* and *dreadfully*. Example (29) illustrates the dense repetitive usage that is found in some depositions.

> (29)
> [Hand 1] The Deposistion of Elizabeth Hubburd aged about 17 years who testifieth and saith that on the 27th of february 1691/92 I saw the Apperishtion of Sarah osborn the wife of ~~Ex~~ Allexander osborn who did **most greviously** <u>tortor</u> me by <u>pricking and pinching</u> me **most dreadfully** and so she continewed <u>hurting</u> me **most greviously** tell the first of march 1691/92: being the day of hir Examination ∧{~~being first of march~~} and then also Sarah osborn <u>did tortor</u> me **most greviously** by <u>pinching and pricking</u> me **most dre\<ad\>fully** and also seuerall times sence Sarah osborn has affleted me and urged me to writ\<e\> in hir book
> (*RSWH*, no. 10)

It is notable that verbs describing actions that express stance and are in themselves emphatic are still underscored with the help of multals: it is clearly not enough to indicate torture, torment, and affliction, but those actions have to be further stressed. Indeed, AFFLICT, TORMENT, and TORTURE are surprisingly often modified

in the corpus of Salem depositions: AFFLICT 32%, TORMENT 64%, and TORTURE 63%.[7] What may underpin such usage is not only a wish to stress the severity of the affliction, but to put the spotlight on and draw attention to certain actions allegedly perpetrated by the accused and on the deponents as victims of such crimes. This was undoubtedly important for bringing an accused to trial. As I showed in 5.3.1.2, we find very much the same wording in indictment documents in Salem, here illustrated again in (30).

> (30)
> by which said wicked Arts the said. [Hand 2] Mary Walcott [Hand 1] the [Hand 2] thirty first [Hand 1] Day of [Hand 2] May [Hand 1] in the [Hand 2] fourth [Hand 1] Year abovesaid and divers other Dayes and times as well before, as after, was and is **Tortured Afflicted, Pined, Consumed wasted & Tormented** ag[t] the Peace of our Sovereigne Lord and Lady the King and Queen and against the forme of the Statute in that case made and Provided./.   (*RSWH*, no. 397)

This echoing of verbs and hence actionable offenses would show that the deponents' experiences are in line with what the law requires for "a true bill," that is, the conclusion that the accused should stand trial. The multals stress that the deponents' experience even go beyond what is expected. But this is likely not their only function; rather, they act as textual highlighters of the word or action itself, bringing readers' and listeners' attention to the word/action and possibly reminding them of the connection to the indictment formulations. In other words, the multals are metalinguistic "flags." Making sure that there is clear evidence is of importance for bringing the case beyond the Grand Jury hearing and launching the trial stage of the proceedings. But it is also essential, I argue, for the role that many deponents wished to claim for themselves in the Salem CoP and its joint enterprise. Bringing their accusations in line with the formulations of formal legal documents and thus making themselves "model" victims of witchcraft, deponents could claim a central role in the CoP: they are crucial for bringing the case forward; without them there is no case; and they even embody the key piece of evidence that can help the authorities and thwart the witches' alleged subversion of their community.

As in other contexts, the identities of the deponents and the recorders matter in this context. We find a notable pattern centering on depositions recorded by Thomas Putnam, especially those penned for the core group of accusers, as shown in Table 6.5.

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7.   In some cases, the verbs co-occur, as in AFFLICT *and* TORTURE (see also Doty and Wicklund 2017: 255–256). In these combinations, it is difficult to tell whether a multal is intended to modify one or both of the expressions (as in *grievously afflict and torture*). I have been conservative and only counted the modifier with one or the other verb, depending on placement before or after the conjunction *and*.

Table 6.5 Multals according to recorder in the narrative context of witchcraft[8]

Recorder	Total N of multals	Top 2 multals
Thomas Putnam	292	*Grievous/grievously*: 196 *Dreadful/dreadfully*: 68
Samuel Parris	27	*Much*: 10 *Grievously*: 7
Edward Putnam	9	*Grievous/grievously*: 3
Simon Willard	7	*Greatly*: 3 *Grievously*: 2
Other (29 recorders; 1–6 instances each)	53	*Grievous/grievously*: 10 *Sorely*: 7
TOTAL	388	

There are a number of intricately interlinked issues behind these patterns. As we saw in Chapter 5, among the accusatory depositions, a broad division can be seen among the Salem depositions in terms of the type of evidence they provide, as well as the stance they express. One group focuses on disease, death, strangeness, and fright (5.3.1.1). These would include the Herrick family's loss of several cows (*RSWH*, no. 353), William Baker's mysteriously disappearing beer (*RSWH*, no. 41), and Samuel Shattuck's ailing child (*RSWH*, no. 575). Such accounts are rarely, if ever, written by the more frequently occuring recorders in the Salem depositions, such as Thomas Putnam, Samuel Parris and others. Rather, these records were, as far as we can tell (see 2.3), mostly written by the deponents themselves or by a neighbor or acquaintance. As a rule, these narratives relatively infrequently contain multals (or other degree modifiers). Indeed, since they rarely discuss witchcraft af-fliction, their discourse is strikingly different from that of the second broad category (see Chapter 8 for a fuller discussion).

This second category of depositions is centered on the narratives of those who claim to have suffered harm from witchcraft, that is, allegedly more direct victims of the torments and tortures that the accused are assumed to have perpetrated, or of those who are observing these claimed torments. These are the narratives of affliction, discussed in 5.3.1.2. In these depositions, the picture is dominated very much by the four named recorders in Table 6.5, and the relatively small group of witnesses that they write for. The depositions recorded by Thomas Putnam are obviously central in this regard, as the use of multals in the context of witchcraft affliction is so prevalent (see also Grund 2012b; 46–47; Ray 2015: 96, 100). Putnam

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8.   Note that the figures here do not match those of Grund (2012b). The study in this chapter is based on a larger set of depositions, and the figures in Grund (2012b) pertain to all uses of multals not only within the narrative context of witchcraft as here.

writes for a broad range of deponents, and, while the large number of depositions he writes may partly account for the prevalence of these features in his depositions, the persistent, stacked usage is not found elsewhere. It is also significant that the use is very much centered on core group of accusers, especially the inner circle: 190 of the multals are found in depositions for Ann Putnam Jr., Elizabeth Hubbard, Mercy Lewis, Mary Walcott, and Abigail Williams. An additional forty-three in testimony by Sarah Bibber, Elizabeth Booth, Mary Warren, and Susannah Shelden. Yet another thirty instances are found when Putnam writes testimony for himself and/or Edward Putnam, Nathaniel Ingersoll, and others relating observations of the core members' afflictions, as shown in (31) (see also below for Edward Putnam and Samuel Parris).

> (31)
> The deposistion of Tho: putnam aged 40: years and Edward putnam agged 38 years who testifieth and saith. that we haueing ben conversan<t> with seuerall of the afflected parsons ~~we~~ as mary walcott mercy lewes Eliz: Hubburt and we haue se<e>n them **most dreadfully** tomented   (*RSWH*, no. 127)

In Samuel Parris's depositions, we find multals in witchcraft contexts when he records testimony for his niece, Abigail Williams, the only core accuser that he writes for directly (apart from one deposition that also includes Ann Putnam Jr. together with Williams) (Grund 2012b; 3.3.4). However, similar usage is also found when he writes testimony for himself and usually one or both of Nathaniel Ingersoll and Thomas Putnam, detailing their observations of the afflictions of other, usually during the initial interrogation of an accused.

Similar patterns are found in depositions written by Edward Putnam. However, multals occur in the narrative context of witchcraft almost exclusively when Edward himself is describing the perceived afflictions of core or related accusers, such as Ann Putnam Jr. and Mercy Lewis (and others); with one possible exception, he does not record testimony for the core group of accusers or women and girls just outside this group.

Simon Willard normally only produced depositions in the context of the Grand Jury hearing, as he appears to have been asked to work for the jury by recording oaths during the proceedings (2.3). Additional evidence not written down beforehand appears to have surfaced during these hearings or witnesses provided additional or supporting evidence, and Willard would often record it (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 555, 595). This evidence is exclusively by inner circle core members (Elizabeth Hubbard, Mary Walcott, etc.) or outer or aspiring core members (Mary Warren Sara Churchill).

The major pattern that emerges here is one that I will come back to more fully in Chapter 8: while degree modifiers are used in a range of contexts, by a range of

recorders and deponents, the usage is centered on a small number of recorders, recording testimony for a particular group of deponents, who report a particular kind of evidence. It is difficult and, in the end, perhaps not very productive to try to disentangle the various contributing factors to the discourse of "textual histronics" that this use of degree modifiers conveys, and multals used in contexts of witchcraft affliction in particular. But what can be said is that not all members of the Salem CoP used these linguistic resources to the same extent and for the same purposes. Although probably influenced by the type of evidence they were providing, the core group and those who aspired to be part of it use multals to not only emphasize their status as severely afflicted victims, but to bring home to those in power that they were central for the prosecution of the alleged witches. In other words, they were part of the core members of the CoP and were indispensable for the CoP's enterprise. Or so they were positioned by the recorders writing for them. Irrespective of who is responsible for the stancetaking, we see a small group of young women and girls placed linguistically and textually in a position of potential power, at the center of the CoP that was the trial proceedings at Salem.

6.3.3 Maximal modifiers

Although maximizers are like multals in that they scale a quality upwards, they are much less common than multals in the Salem depositions (x30). This difference is arguably not wholly unexpected. It is difficult to see some of the multals being replaced by maximizers in any given context, since the qualities, experiences, phenomena, or actions modified do not lend themselves to being modified at the top degree of a scale. In other words, the multals represent a maximum degree even if maximizers are not employed. For example, a claim of being *completely* or *fully tortured/tormented/afflicted* or perhaps even *the most* would raise the issue of frame of reference or even comparison among different deponents: if someone claimed to be tortured more than another, would that not mean that one person is a greater victim than another? Such a claim would presumably have implications for the unity and position of a core group of accusers (and others).

With so few examples, it is difficult to see any prominent patterns. It is perhaps notable that ten of the thirty uses occur in the context of stressing the reliability of observation, judgment, and knowledge, that is, evidential contexts, as in (32) and (33).

> (32)
> Acording to our **best** obseruation we could not decern that shee knewe what we came for before we tould her   (*RSWH*, no. 31)

(33)
I knowing of her well also yᵉ garb she did vse to goe in. did **clearely** & **plainely** know her (*RSWH*, no. 282)

In (32), the deponents stress the reliability of what they saw, although the contextual, pragmatic value of the full phrase, *according to our best observation*, can act both as a booster of the statement and as a hedge (see 7.3.4). This seems to have been especially important in depositions endorsing the accused, as here. In (33), however, the phrase *clearly and plainly* appears to signal more emphatically that there was no doubt in the deponent's mind about what he saw. Considering how frequent evidential markers are in the Salem depositions (see Chapter 7), it is striking that there are so relatively few maximals in this context. Indeed, they are entirely absent from depositions written for the core group and related deponents, including depositions written by Thomas Putnam, where other degree modifiers are so common. Instead, while frequent, evidential markers remain unmodified. Part of the reason for that may be that the evidential markers themselves (such as SEE) appear to signal emphasis and certainty.

6.3.4 Approximating modifiers

The approximating category is made up almost completely of one degree modifier: *almost*. It indicates that the result, state, etc. of the modified expression has virtually been reached, but not fully (Mittwoch, Huddleston, and Collins 2002: 723). In (34), for example, the deponent was close to being frightened out of his wits.

(34)
and with the dreadfull noyse & hidious shapes of these creaturs and firebale this deponent was **almost** frited out of his witts: (*RSWH*, no. 149)

Mittwoch, Huddleston, and Collins (2002: 723) note that *almost* (together with a few other approximators) "trigger[s] a strong negative implicature." That is, in (34), the deponent retained his sanity, although came close to being driven insane by fright. However, while such an implicature is certainly true for the Salem examples as well, the deponents at Salem likely wished to stress not only what they had overcome, but also how close to had come to not doing so.

Indeed, there are striking patterns in terms of what expressions *almost* modifies and in what contexts. While there are a handful of examples such as (35), where *almost* modifies an expression of time, a majority of examples refer to physical harm, fright, and death, as in (36)–(38) (and 34).

(35)
Acordingly we went and we found her in A weak and Lowe condition in body as shee told us and had been sicke **allmost** A weak (*RSWH*, no. 31)

(36)

so he continewed most dreafully to hurt me by times beating me & **almost** braking my back   (*RSWH*, no. 593)

(37)

it woold vsualy end with most dreadfull shapes noyses ye<?>ing & sceeching [= screeching] that **almost** scared him out of his witts   (*RSWH*, no. 149)

(38)

sundry times she hath seen & been **almost** killed by the Apparition of John Willard of Salem Village Husbandman   (*RSWH*, no. 183)

As many as 99 (or 70%) of the 141 instances of *almost* are used in connection with the verb CHOKE, as in (39)–(41).

(39)

for if she did but loock upon me she would strick me down or **almost** choake me: (*RSWH*, no. 668)

(40)

for if she did but look parsonally upon me she would strick me down or **allmost** choak me to death   (*RSWH*, no. 405)

(41)

Sometime in July Last m$^{\varepsilon}$ Burrougs pinched mee uery much and choaked [Hand 2] me **almost** to death: (*RSWH*, no. 458)

In some instances, *almost* modifies CHOKE directly, placed before the verb, as in (39) and (40), but, at other times, it appears to modify the following prepositional phrase *to death* (which occurs 39 times out of the 99 examples; cf. Bäcklund 1973: 30). It is not clear if there is a significant difference in interpretation here (between *almost* CHOKE and CHOKE *almost to death*). As the *OED* (s.v., *choke* v.) illustrates, CHOKE signifies both the act of "stop[ping] the aperture of the throat so as to prevent breathing" and "kill[ing] by so doing." Even without the modifying prepositional phrase, the verb CHOKE most likely signifies 'kill by choking' in this context. It seems unlikely that the deponent would note that the 'aperture of the throat was *almost* stopped'; instead, here the emphasis is on the near-death experience. This becomes even clearer by looking at the larger situation in which these claims appear, illustrated in (42).

(42)

and then he sett upon me most greviviously and did tortor me most dreadfully also in the time of his Examination he affleccted me very much: and seuerall times sence the Apperishtion of John prockstor sen^{r} has most greviously tortored me by pinching and **allmost** choaking me urging me vehemently to writ in his book
                                                                               (*RSWH*, no. 59)

The deponent, Ann Putnam Jr., stresses the tortures that she has been exposed to (underscored by several degree modifiers, as discussed in 6.3.2) building up towards the choking; in other words, there is a progression from affliction and torture to experiences approaching death.

The use of *almost* is noteworthy here in a number of respects. On one level, it fits the normal bill of approximators, as it does have a "lowering effect on the force of the verb" (Quirk et al. 1985: 597): the deponent was not quite killed through strangulation. At the same time, pragmatically, the full, modified phrase does not suggest an overall lowering effect. In fact, it signals the opposite. For obvious reasons, a deponent could not claim that the alleged witch killed them, but, by claiming that the accused *almost* succeeded, the deponent can make the strongest possible statement of an actionable offense: the deponent was abused to such an extent that their life was in danger. This claim places the deponent in a particular category of witnesses: he or she is not simply one who has suffered loss of cattle or been exposed to illness, but one who has personally escaped the jaws of death by a narrow margin (cf. Ziegeler 2016). (Exactly how the deponent escaped or why the accused never completed the alleged strangulation is not clear, other than the claim that the accused may have simply wanted to force by all means possible the deponent's signature in the Devil's book.) What we see here again is the positioning act that many deponents seem to have performed, stressing their central role in the trials and in the Salem CoP.

In this regard, it is important again to note that as many as 113 (or 80%) of the 141 *almost* examples occur in depositions penned by Thomas Putnam, and 95 of the instances occur in depositions by women and young girls, especially those belonging to the core group of accusers (both inner and outer circle and aspirational). Indeed, the connection between *almost* and *choke* is found almost exclusively in Putnam's depositions. The eight examples found outside his corpus occur primarily in depositions by the same young women but written down by other recorders, and, notably, there are two instances in self-authored depositions by Edward Putnam, Thomas's brother. Whether these overall patterns reflect Putnam's positioning of the deponents, the deponents' joint collusion, or a mixture of the two is not easily resolved (as we have also seen elsewhere). It will be discussed more holistically in 8.2.

6.3.5 Paucal, minimal, moderate, relative, and negated multal and maximal modifiers

Degree modifers that scale downwards or that express an even or relative extent are uncommon in the Salem depositions. Indeed, relative, moderate, minimal modifiers as well as negative multals and maximals are rare, and there are no obvious generalizable patterns. But it is perhaps significant that there are so few of them

in comparison with the multal, maximal, and even approximating categories. The depositions focus on emphasizing acts and experiences that scale upwards rather than those that scale downwards: as a rule, the deponents and recorders are not downtoning or hedging the experiences described but stressing them and their importance.

Like the approximating degree modifiers, some of the examples in these categories, while technically downscaling, act to boost the deponent's alleged experiences in certain pragmatic contexts. Several of the minimals, for example, underscore the deponents' helplessness or struggles in the face of claimed witchcraft assaults, as in (43) and (44).

> (43)
> and presently upon it the child was stracke into a great fit that my housband and I could **hardly** hold it   (*RSWH*, no. 334)

> (44)
> and Emedatly I did fale into such a trembling Condition that I was as if all my joynts did knoke togather so tha\<t\> I Could **hardly** goe along   (*RSWH*, no. 411)

In (43), Sarah Bibber stresses the extent of her child's fit by noting that two grown people could barely restrain a four-year-old. In this case, the clause with the minimal accentuates the multal *great*, which already stresses the severity of the fit. In (44), on the other hand, Elizabeth Symonds's trembling condition leaves her almost unable to move. So what we see here is that minimals locally indicate a very small degree, but, in a larger pragmatic scope, they act to reinforce and boost a person's perceived experience with witchcraft (for a discussion of ability and lack of ability, see 8.4).

We see similar trends with some of the paucals, which signal that something holds to a small extent. This category is slightly more frequent than the other categories discussed here, with twenty-seven examples. A vast majority of these examples (x19) occur in contexts of time, place, or direction, indicating that something took place *a little* before or after a particular time (as in 45), or that a point is *a little* below, beyond, or further from a specific point (as in 46) (cf. Bäcklund 1973: 52–53; also Claridge, Jonsson, and Kytö 2021).

> (45)
> I being caried up to wills hill on the: 16th of may **a litle** before night I saw their the Apperishtion of John ~~wilknes~~ willard a choaking Daniell willknes
>
>   (*RSWH*, no. 180)

> (46)
> as he was going home **a litle** beyond the field of Georg martin at a hill caled goodals hill this deponent was bewildered   (*RSWH*, no. 141)

If the paucals carry a particular pragmatic function in this context, it is likely one of hedging. Instead of giving a categorical statement, the deponent expresses some uncertainty about the exact time and place, making it less precise (cf. Channell 1994: 42). It would perhaps seem unexpected that the deponents and recorders would pay attention to small details of time and place at the same time as they make categorical statement about interaction with apparitions and affliction by witchcraft. But of course the time and place was important for proving or disproving a person's guilt, and providing a credible testimony in such seemingly small details may further add to the convincingness of the narrative (see also Claridge, Jonsson, and Kytö 2021).

More in line with the boosting use of approximators and of the downscaling categories cited above, some examples seem to possess broader pragmatic or narrative implications in the retelling of past experiences beyond marking a small degree. In two depositions against one of the three originally accused, Tituba (the minister Samuel Parris's slave), Ann Putnam Jr. and Elizabeth Hubbard note the change in affliction after Tituba started confessing to being a witch, illustrated in Hubbard's testimony in (47). Both are written by Thomas Putnam.

> (47)
> but as soon as she began to confess she left ofe hurting me and has hurt {<m>e}
> **but litle** sence   (*RSWH*, no. 12)

This usage should be contrasted with the earlier testimony in the same deposition, which stresses Hubbard being tormented and hurt "most greviously" and "almost" choked. After the confession, however, this affliction more or less stopped, though not completely. This contrast seems significant. Whether consciously intended or not, this outline of before and after sends the signal of how confessors vs. non-confessors would be treated by the accusers: the complaints about those who did not confess were vociferous and incessant, while accusations against those who confessed were toned down and an emphasis was even put on the minimal hurt they had committed after confession. Of course, this is part of a larger pattern of the formula of confessing and avoiding the gallows, a recurring theme in the Salem trial proceedings (see 1.3). As we know that depositions were read out aloud during the pretrial, Grand Jury, and trial hearings (see 2.2), the message in these testimonies would have been widely heard and the implications presumably not lost on the accused as well as the ones yet to be accused. The message that was underscored by the contrasting use of degree modifiers (*most grievously* vs. *little*) would also have contributed to placing the witnesses as particularly powerful and central members of the Salem CoP. Since they claimed the affliction, which was a clear actionable offense (as noted in the indictment documents; see 5.3.1.2, 6.3.2.9), they were in the position of strenghtening their claims by scaling their torments, tortures, and

afflictions up or down. The textual and linguistic tools that the deponents and re-corders wielded clearly had significant power, in terms of accomplishing their (and the CoP's) various communicative and social goals.

6.4   Conclusion

The descriptions we have of the Salem pretrial hearings and trial proceedings show them to be loud, boisterous affairs. I have argued that many witness depositions mimic on the textual level what often took place in the court room and meeting hall. The texts often "scream" to the reader, wanting to bring attention to themselves, the sufferings of the deponents whose testimony they contain, and the centrality of what they have to say about an alleged witch. These "textual histrionics" center on the core group of accusers (the inner circle in particular, but also the outer and other aspirational accusers) and the relatively small group of recorders that are responsible for writing up their experiences. While we see degree modifiers across depositions, it is in the accuser accounts of afflictions that those features occur with remarkable consistency and frequency, most notably in the use of *grievously* or *dreadfully afflicted/tormented/tortured*, *almost choked*, or *verily believe in my heart*. All of these phrases (and others) act to highlight what particular deponents can offer the authorities: sufferers of witchcraft attacks that almost succumbed to the hellish tortures but lived to tell the tale, tortures that perfectly map on to the legal stipulations needed for sending an accused to trial, sufferers whose convictions of the guilt of the accused are held as deeply as their religious convictions. Indeed, here are the people who are central for the whole enterprise of the trial proceedings to go forward and hence the smooth running of the Salem CoP.

As we know, the authorities certainly granted many of the deponents the central role they appear to have coveted. It is of course difficult to say with certainty whether the deponents' textual positioning moves were persuasive to the authorities, but the consistent patterns in degree modifiers clearly suggest that the deponents and the recorders did not simply rely on the content of the testimonies to make a case for the importance of the evidence and of the people who possessed or even constituted the evidence: the *what* was not simply enough. Rather, they were highly concerned with the *how* of the message: framing the evidence and the role of the deponent through the use of strategically deployed degree modifiers allowed them to project the desired identity of core members of the Salem CoP.

"I saw the Apperishtion of Rebekah nurs"

Sourcing experience

7.1 Introduction

In any legal process, the source of the witnesses' reported evidence is of crucial importance: have the witnesses experienced what they report first-hand?[1] Have they heard someone make a particular statement or are they reporting what someone else has overheard? Is the evidence based on inferences or assumptions that the witnesses make? In modern-day trials, these types of evidence carry different weight. First-hand experience (through sight or, to some extent, hearing) has a premium, while opinions, inferences, and reporting what others have overheard (so-called hearsay) are usually inadmissable (Stygall 1994: 138). While modern rules and praxis are not directly applicable to the Salem witch trials (as we shall see in detail later), the basis of the witnesses' claims was certainly a central and contested issue during the proceedings. What is similar across time is the fact that English does not have an obligatory system of marking source of information (unlike some other languages; see Aikhenvald 2004). At the same time, like their modern counterparts, the Salem witnesses often include lexical or grammatical markers that indicate the basis of their knowledge, as illustrated in (1).

> (1)
> The deposistion of Eliz: Hubburd who testifieth and saith that I was a a considerable time afflected by a woman w^{ch} **tould** me hir name was Redd: and that she came from marblehead: but on the 31 may 1692 being the day of the Examination of willmott Redd then I **saw** that she was ye very same woman that **tould** me hir name was Redd: and she did most greviously afflect and torment me dureing the time of hir Examination for if she did but look upon me she would strick me down or almost choake me: also on the day of hir Examination I **saw** willmott Redd or hir Apperance most dreadfully afflect and torment mary walcott Abigaill williams ~~Eliz: Booth~~ and Ann putnam and I **beleue** that willmott Redd is wicth and that she hath often afflected me and the affore said parsons by acts of wicthcraft
>
> (*RSWH*, no. 248)

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1. This chapter represents a reworked and expanded version of Grund (2012a). The chapter title quote comes from *RSWH*, no. 292.

Not only does Elizabeth Hubbard, one of the members of the inner core group of accusers, signal first-hand experience through sight (*saw* x2), she also claims to repeat what Wilmot Reed, the alleged witch, told her. And she finishes the deposition by emphasizing her conviction ("beleue") that the accused perpetrated the acts and is a witch. It is notable that this deposition revolves around what is known as spectral evidence, the claim by some of the accusers that they were attacked by an alleged witch in spectral form (see 1.3). Probably in response to the fact that this evidence could not be experienced by everybody, Hubbard (or the recorder) makes the rhetorical move of boosting the evidence by emphasizing that she herself saw the accused commit the acts and even conversed with her. While a deponent's conviction or belief would most likely be ignored or ruled out as irrelevant evidence in a modern-day trial (as indicated above), there are reasons to believe that such expressions were considered important legal and narrative markers at Salem.

Indeed, I argue that markers of evidentiality (or evidentials), such as those highlighted in (1), were leveraged during the Salem trials for a variety of stance-related reasons: to anticipate challenges against a claim, to boost credibility, to downtone a claim, and not least to position the witnesses as core, or even non-members of the Salem trial CoP. Looking at evidentials in the Salem depositions highlights the complex dynamics of these markers. The interpretation of the role of an evidential is highly context dependent (see 4.3.2), and the same marker may play different roles for different deponents and recorders (cf. Eckert's [2008] notion of "indexical field"). This underscores the need for close attention to the markers in the narrow as well as broad sociopragmatic context in which they occur.

The chapter outlines how deponents and recorders drew on evidential resources as they were positioning themselves and the testimony. In 7.2, I review some previous work on evidentiality and some methodological issues before focusing on the results. After an overview of the usage (7.3.1), I concentrate on different types of information sources that the depositions appeal to: sensory evidence (especially sight and hearing) in 7.3.2, inferences in 7.3.3, assumptions (including a broad range of cognitive processes such as opinions, belief, remembrance, and judgment) in 7.3.4, and quotative information (references to other people's statements) in 7.3.5.

7.2   Evidentiality: Background and methodology

Until fairly recently, researchers have paid relatively little attention to the choices made by users of English in terms of whether to mark the source of their information and, if so, how to mark that source. This is likely in part because English does not have an obligatory, grammatical system of marking. Scholars who are interested in evidentiality have instead focused on languages that have more or less

obligatory systems where the marking is exclusively or primarily morphological rather than lexical (see especially Aikhenvald and Dixon 2003; Aikhenvald 2004; Bednarek 2006: 636–637, 652). However, a few studies on Present-Day English have begun to show that users have a variety of means to mark evidentiality and that they employ those means for a number of pragmatic and discourse-related purposes (e.g., Pomerantz 1984; Chafe 1986; Stygall 1994; Fox 2001; Hyland 2005; Bednarek 2006; Clift 2006; Garretson and Ädel 2008; Aijmer 2009; Whitt 2010, 2014; Berglind-Söderqvist 2020; cf. also Fennell 2011). The relatively few historical studies that exist, on the other hand, have focused on the development and changes of evidential meaning primarily in a limited number of verbs (e.g. Traugott 1989; Gisborne and Holmes 2007; Whitt 2010). Many aspects of evidentiality in English thus remain unexplored, not least the pragmatic functions of evidentials in historical periods, though some studies have ventured into that territory (e.g., Grund 2013, 2016; Whitt 2016).

In the literature, there is some debate about how to delimit the concept of evidentiality. The definitions fall into two major categories, one narrow and one broad, as Bednarek (2006: 636–637) points out (see also Willett 1988; de Haan 1999; for a slightly different characterization, see Dendale and Tasmowski 2001: 341–342). Studies taking a narrow approach limit their field to expressions that indicate the source of information (e.g., sensory evidence, inference, and reported information). This approach is particularly common among language typology scholars, who, as noted above, primarily see evidentiality as a morphological category (e.g., the contributions in Aikhenvald and Dixon 2003).

The broader definition of evidentiality, on the other hand, covers both source of information and the evaluation of the reliability and probability of the information. In other words, evidentiality is regarded as the same as, part of, or intersecting with what is often referred to as epistemic modality (see esp. Willett 1988: 52–56; de Haan 1999: 85–87; also Palmer 1986: 51–54, 69–70). This merger or overlap is frequently found in studies or discussions of English (e.g., Chafe 1986; Biber and Finegan 1988, 1989; Stygall 1994; Palander-Collin 1999; Taavitsainen 2001; Precht 2003). In fact, in studies adopting this approach, source of information usually takes a back seat to or is excluded completely in favor of epistemic meanings or features (such as modal auxiliaries or epistemic adverbs such as *probably* and *possibly*). Frequently, then, evidentiality is used simply as an alternative term for epistemic modality or even stance. Although some typology scholars also suggest that evidentials may have epistemic meanings or extensions, they emphasize the primacy of the source marking, showing that evidentials do not always have epistemic meanings, or that, in some languages, evidentials never have epistemic extensions (e.g., Aikhenvald 2004: 6–7).

The starting point of the study in this chapter is the narrower approach: I am interested in the types of sources of evidence that the depositions appeal to. At the same time, the stance-related (or epistemic) work that the source marking accomplishes is crucial for this study. Indeed, it becomes clear that the reason for marking the source of information in the Salem documents is often pragmatically conditioned, that is, evidentials are, for example, used to emphasize or downplay the reliability of the evidence given in a certain context (see also Hyland 2005: 51–52; Martin and White 2005: 111–116; Gray, Biber, and Hiltunen 2011: 237–238). But, conceptually and terminologically, I consider evidentiality as a subcategory of stance concerned with source marking and evaluative extensions of such marking; evidentiality is not simply an alternative term for stance (or epistemic modality).

In addition to problems of definition, there is not complete consensus about the categories of evidentiality, although the schemes that have been suggested clearly overlap (e.g. Chafe 1986: 263–269; Willett 1988: 56–57; Aikhenvald 2004: 63–64; Bednarek 2006: 644). I adopt a modified version of Aikhenvald's (2004: 63–64) semantically-based taxonomy shown in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Categories of evidentiality

Category	Explanation	Example
Sensory	Information based on the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch	I **saw** this willard suckle the Apparition of two black piggs on his breasts (*RSWH*, no. 179)
Inference	Information based on an inference from visual or tangible evidence or result	my son Daniel comeinge and vnderstanding I was go\<i\>nge with him to Boston. and. **seemed** to be much troubled that I would go with the sayd Willard (*RSWH*, no. 270)
Assumption	Information based on cognitive processes such as logical reasoning, assumption, etc.	I **beleeue** many Innocent persons haue been accused, & Imprisoned, yᵉ Conceit of Spectre Evidence as an infallible mark did too far prevaile with us (*RSWH*, no. 745)
Quotative	Information based on a report i) with or ii) without a specific source	i) the **Rumer went** that the sd martin had a brokn head at yᵗ time but the deponent cannot speake to that vpon his owne knowlig (*RSWH*, no. 139; without specific source) ii) […] their young daughter who was viseted with strang fitts & in her fitts (**as her father & mother affirmed**) did mention goodwife How the wife of James How Junior of Ipswich (*RSWH*, no. 284; with specific source)

Since Aikhenvald (2004) developed her taxonomy on the basis of present-day languages in which evidentiality is primarily encoded morphologically, some categories required modification to be more suitable for my English historical material. I merge Aikhenvald's (2004) categories of Visual and Non-visual Sensory into one category since English does not make the kind of significant distinctions that prompted Aikhenvald (2004) to make the initial separation. As I demonstrate later (Section 7.3.2), however, separation of evidential markers according to the five senses does yield some striking, overall results. Aikhenvald (2004: 63) does not provide an exhaustive list of aspects covered by the category of Assumption, but says that it "may include logical reasoning, assumption, or simply general knowledge." I incorporate markers of a number of cognitive processes that clearly point to the deponent's mental faculties as the source of information, including belief, remembrance, understanding, and opinion. Finally, Aikhenvald (2004: 64) has two categories for information based on reports: "Hearsay" for reports without a source, and "Quotative" for reports with a source. Although the two do exhibit differing patterns in the Salem material, I prefer the term Quotative for both categories (with a subdivision into "with specific source" and "without specific source"). This avoids confusion since the concept of "hearsay" in a legal sense, which may in fact cover both of Aikhenvald's (2004) categories, is of importance in this study.

Another point of debate in the study of evidentiality is exactly what constructions qualify as evidential. It is generally agreed that an evidential needs to have scope over a proposition. That is, there has to be a fact, statement, or piece of information that the evidential governs. This means that, while *saw* in "I saw a house" is not an evidential, it is in "I saw the house burning" (Whitt 2010: 26; see also Anderson 1986: 274; Whitt 2014; also 4.2.1). In the first example, the *saw* only indicates perception, but the second sentence has two propositions and hence "contain[s] [an] additional deictic component because it points to the speaker's evidence and does not solely indicate an act of perception" (Whitt 2010: 26). However, it may not be as straightforward as these examples from Whitt (2010: 26) suggest. Boye (2010, 2012) argues that even examples such as "I saw the house burning" do not indicate a case of evidentiality but a case of observing a "state-of-affairs." Boye's (2010, 2012) arguments, however, are based on examples out of context and typological evidence, and it is clear from the Salem depositions that examples similar to this one must be seen as encoding evidentiality (for an indepth discussion and modification of Boye's argument, see Whitt 2018b).

For this exploration of evidentiality and stance, I therefore take a broad view of proposition in the sense of "piece of knowledge" or "piece of information." I have argued in Grund (2012a, 2013, 2016) that whether a construction encodes a proposition or not should not be based on construction types, but on how we interpret the construction in a particular textual or pragmatic context. In fact, both of the

"house"-constructions presented by Whitt (2010) could be evidential depending on the context of use (see also Whitt 2014: 48n3, 2018b). In my identification, I was guided by the question "What source is provided for the statement/proposition/claim?" or "How does the deponent know what he/she claims to know?" (see also 7.3.2.1 for the notion of "pragmatic scope" of evidentials).

A particularly thorny issue for this study is how to treat variation, especially in terms of considering contexts where an evidential may potentially have occurred but did not. Including such a consideration would have been in line with variationist principles of accountability (e.g., Labov 1969: 738; cf. Grund 2020b) and could potentially deepen our understanding of conscious choices among the deponents and the recorders of their testimonies in marking or not marking the source (seeing that in many contexts, there is a choice). However, as in the case of degree modifiers (see 6.2), this approach is fraught with difficulties, as determining the potential applicability of an evidential in a seventeenth-century text obviously involves a great deal of subjectivity. I therefore do not attempt a systematic variationist approach here, but I provide some more limited, qualitative discussions, especially in the context of Sensory evidentials (7.3.2).

7.3   The nature of evidence

7.3.1   Overall patterns of evidentials in the Salem depositions

As Table 7.2 makes clear, the Salem depositions appeal to different epistemological bases variably (for the linguistic constructions used to express these categories, see Grund 2012a: 15–16).

Table 7.2 Evidential categories

Evidential category	N (%)
Quotative	774 (49%)
Sensory	525 (33%)
Assumption	232 (15%)
Inference	51 (3%)
Total	1582 (100%)

Sensory and Quotative markers (33% and 49%, respectively, of 1582 instances) clearly predominate among the semantic categories; Inference is infrequent (51 instances or 3%); and the related Assumption category is firmly in the middle (232 instances or 15%). Overall, the patterns indicate that the usage is very much dependent on the nature and context of the trial process in Salem. Perhaps somewhat

surprisingly, there is a focus on reporting what others have said rather than what has been experienced first-hand. But as we shall see, complex dynamics of positioning are involved in these patterns. The "mediated" sources of Inference and Assumption are much more infrequent, but it is notable that they exist at all, which points to differences in the contexts of modern-day trials and the proceedings of the Salem witch trials.

7.3.2 Sensory evidentials

Sensory evidentials signal a direct, first-hand experience of an event through vision, hearing, touch, smell, or taste. Only vision and hearing appear with some frequency in the Salem depositions, while touch is rare, and smell and taste non-existent (cf. Schiff 2015: 390; Whitt 2010: 219). The non-existence of evidentials of smell and taste is perhaps not surprising in the legal context of the Salem trials, where what had been seen and heard must have been front and center (cf. Grund 2013: 331). I concentrate here on the patterns of vision and hearing.

7.3.2.1 *Vision*

Vision is by far the most frequent category, with 421 or 80% of the 525 instances. Visual perception is indicated by a number of means, primarily by verb phrases or verb phrase + noun phrases, such as BEHOLD, ESPY, OBSERVE, PERCEIVE, TAKE *notice*, and, the visual evidential *par excellence*, SEE (for other linguistic constructions, see Grund 2012a: 18).[2] The emphasis on vision is to some extent expected: it signals (or implies) first-hand, direct experience. The person was there to witness the event and can retell it as it (allegedly) happened. This signal (or implication) is important, considering the contexts in which we find evidentials expressing vision. The appeal to vision is also expected on a different, social and cultural level. The ethos of "watchfulness" was key for Puritans. People monitored each other for sins; if they failed to do so, it could entail dire consequences for the community as a whole. As Cotton Mather (1710: 85) put it (drawing on the Bible),[3] "If the Neighbour of an Elect, or Godly, Man Sin, the Godly Man himself has also Sinned. The Obligations of Neighbours Watchfully to Admonish one another, were what that Saying intended." Making sure that the community was in line was thus a pre-occupation of

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2.   There are no unambiguous examples of the verb SEE referring to more abstract, cognitive faculties (in the sense of 'understand,' 'recognize'), although the *OED* (s.v. *see*) records instances of the latter sense from Middle English onwards (see also, e.g., Sweetser 1990: 23–48; Gisborne and Holmes 2007; Grund 2016: 157–159).

3.   Matthew 18:15; cf. also Luke 17:3.

Puritans (Thompson 1983: 521–522; Kamensky 1998), and that may be reflected in the frequent evidential appeal to vision.

What is particularly striking about the visual evidentials, however, is the fairly limited contexts in which they occur, especially the verb SEE. The vast majority appears when deponents relate their own or others' afflictions by alleged witches, who, the depositions insist, frequently appear in spectral form, as in (2) and (3). We also find them, though less commonly, in contexts when deponents describe their encounters with unexplained phenomena or suspicious creatures, where the subtext usually appears to be that they are supernatural, as in (4).

> (2)
> at the same time also I **saw** the Apperishtion of Martha Cory greviously afflect mircy lewes   (*RSWH*, no. 19)
>
> (3)
> their I **saw** the apparition of the aboue said gooddy: Easteck: a choaking of mersey Lueis   (*RSWH*, no. 205)
>
> (4)
> yᵉ same night yᵉ sᵈ John Hughes beeing in Bed in a closte Roome and yᵉ dore beeing fast so yᵗ no Catt nor dogg could Come in yᵉ sᵈ John **saw** a Great light appeare in yᵉ sᵈ chamber and Risseing up in his bed he **saw** a large Grey Catt att his bedˢ foot   (*RSWH*, no. 14)

This usage is notable in several respects. As indicated in 7.2, marking the source of information is not obligatory; rather the user has the option of marking or no marking in many contexts. The question is then what triggers marking. Cross-linguistic and typological research has shown that certain types of evidence is more likely to be marked than others. Direct perception is a category less likely to be marked (Aikhenvald 2004: 73; Boye 2010, 2012). In light of such evidence and his own results from studying early modern medical writing, Whitt (2016: 255–265) suggests that "direct observation is an 'unmarked' category" and is "left unexpressed in discourse contexts where it is clear such observation provides the source of knowledge." In (4), for instance, if John Hughes had simply said that a light appeared in the chamber and that a large gray cat was at the foot of the bed, readers now as well as then would presumably take the evidence to have been directly observed since Hughes was obviously present in the chamber. Instead of simply marking source, then, these markers are also arguably involved in stance work. By using *saw*, Hughes can emphasize the evidential basis and hence the certainty with which he is making the statement: these are weird and unexpected happenings (especially as he notes that the door was locked), but they must be true nonetheless because he witnessed them first-hand. He does not leave it to be deduced by the readers that he witnessed them; he adds the optional evidentials to imprint his stance (cf. Anderson 1986: 277).

This kind of move was undoubtedly particularly important in relation to so-called spectral evidence. As discussed in Section 1.3, spectral evidence, which some of the accusers claimed to possess, was at the heart of the controversy that was the Salem witch trials. The accusers would claim to be attacked by an accused's apparition and fall into frenzied fits. Although there was no objective way for the magistrates to assess this evidence, it was initially accepted without much debate by most of them. Not until after a massive offensive by civic leaders and powerful clerics was spectral evidence disallowed (Hoffer 1997: 78–79, 129–131; Rosenthal 2009: 25–26).

The presence of a visual evidential in these contexts may serve at least two overlapping functions. Most straightforwardly, marking the source of information may be a way of anticipating a challenge of the basis of the evidence: how indeed did the deponent know that it was the apparition of Martha Cory or Goody Esty (in 2 and 3) that attacked Mercy Lewis? The answer, plainly highlighted by the visual evidential, is that the deponent claims to have witnessed it first-hand, through direct visual experience. The certainty of the claim is underscored. More generally, using a visual evidential may be part of a strategy to make spectral evidence more palatable or convincing: it was a way of making the immaterial, abstract specters more concrete, something that could be and was (allegedly) seen. The goal of utilizing an unambiguous marker indicating direct experience was thus to emphasize the "reality" of the specters and as a result remove or assuage doubt. In other words, a reference to vision would have clear stance implications: functioning as a marker of certainty and emphasis, the evidential would lend credibility to the statement.

Interestingly, we even find cases where the deponent uses visual sensory evidentials in reporting what they themselves experienced, as in (5). Here, there would arguably be little doubt that what the deponent experienced was first-hand. But in addition to pushing the legitimacy of spectral evidence more broadly, the marker may also be intended to demonstrate that the deponent was convinced of the particular identity of the alleged assailant.

> (5)
> I **saw** the Apperishtion of Abigail Hoobs the daughter of william Hoobs com and afflect me   (*RSWH*, no. 71)

Supporting these assumptions is the fact that, although there is the option of not using an evidential, as in *The apparition of Martha Cory grievously afflicted Mercy Lewis* instead of the formulation in (2), such non-evidential statements are rare in connection with spectral evidence. And when we do find such unmarked statements, there are often sensory evidentials in the near context that can be seen as having "pragmatic scope" over the statement. That is, even if a given evidential is attached to a particular statement or piece of information, it can be seen as governing subsequent statements as well, as the evidential has already given a visual "frame" for the evidence reported (for this concept, see Grund 2016: 164–167).

Complex patterns are apparent in terms of how these visual evidentials are employed by different deponents and recorders. As we saw in Chapter 5 in particular (and as we shall see further in 8.2), affliction by apparitions and hence spectral evidence is almost exclusively claimed by members of the inner circle of the core group of accusers but also some of the outer circle of the group and others looking in and, arguably, aspiring to be part of the group. On one level, then, the patterns associated with deponents adducing spectral evidence may account for the patterns we see in visual evidentials. However, that does not fully take into account that there is a choice of marking or not marking, as noted earlier. Different members could have made different choices, but what we see are consistent patterns of marking the evidence as having a visual source. These patterns make sense if there was indeed a conscious effort to make spectral evidence legitimate. At the same time, whether conscious or subconscious, the usage also acts to strengthen the ties of the group: not only are the content claims the same, but the linguistic and discoursal strategies are the same. There is a unified message and form of the message. By positioning themselves as having privileged access to evidence not seen by others and stressing that role with certain linguistic markers, the deponents construct a role of authority for themselves: it is they who are providing central and crucial evidence necessary to the CoP's joint enterprise of identifying and charging witches (cf. Jaffe 2009b: 4). This of course works to emphasize the centrality of the group: they have the most damning evidence of actionable offenses that can help convict the accused of performing witchcraft. Not only do they claim to have witnessed first-hand the physical attacks of the accused, but they have also seen the accused do it in spectral form, a supernatural occurrence if there ever was one.

Of course, it has become a common theme of the past two chapters to question whose usage we are witnessing in this regard. As we have seen, the records for the inner circle of the core group (as well as some others) were for the most part written by a very limited number of recorders, most notably Thomas Putnam, but also Edward Putnam, Samuel Parris, and, in the context of the Grand Jury hearings (see 2.3), Simon Willard. It is thus possible that what we are seeing is the recorders' conscious positioning of the evidence for this group of accusers, or indeed a combination of the two. More discussion of this issue follows in Chapter 8.

It is less clear whether we should see the use of visual evidentials outside this group as direct membership moves. Indirectly, of course, evidential markers signaling first-hand knowledge would not only stress the claimed importance of the evidence, but also the importance of the deponent for the workings of the CoP. But whether this was a role people sought and what the reasons may have been for that is unclear. In some cases, what a deponent claims to have seen is not directly connected to a particular accused. For example, John Hughes's deposition, excerpted in (4), never makes clear who is being accused and for what. Perhaps the fact that the

deposition occurs in a document together with depositions by four other deponents who accuse Sarah Good, Sarah Osburn, and Tituba provides the connection; and at this point in the trials, only the three mentioned women had been accused. As we have seen before (5.3.1.1; 6.3.2.2; Grund 2020a), such indirect accusations are not uncommon in some groups of Salem depositions (see 8.4).

If the core group members were positioning themselves as central members of the CoP (or were positioned as such by others), there were also deponents who expressed disalignment with them and, by extension, with the whole CoP enterprise, or possibly claiming a competing central role. Although most depositions were filed against alleged witches, some forty depositions have survived that were filed in support of an accused (for the use and function of such depositions, see 2.2, 5.3.2, 8.5). Some of these deponents make use of the very same evidential strategies, seemingly pushing back against the claims of spectral affliction and accusations of witchcraft, as in (6).

> (6)
> Jams How sen[r] aged about 94 sayth that he liueing by her for about thirty years hath **taken notes** that she hath caried it well becoming her place as a daughter as a wife in all Relation seting aside humain infurmitys as becometh a Christion with Respact to my self as a father very dutyfully & a wifife to my son uery Carfull loueing obediant and kind Considering his want of eye sight tenderly leading him about by the hand {now} desiering god may guide your honours to se a differans between predigous [= prejudice] and Consentes [=conscience] (*RSWH*, no. 341)

James How stresses that he has "taken notes" ('taken notice') over many years of his daughter-in-law's behavior (perhaps as a reflection of the Puritan expectation of "watchfulness"), and, just like the accusers, he highlights his evidence as based on direct visual experience.[4] In doing so, it provides a counter-narrative, using the same kind of linguistic strategies as the core group does.

Another notable strategy in these supporting depositions is the use of negated verbs of vision (and hearing), as in (7).

> (7)
> I **neuer heard** from others or **obserued** by my ~~my~~ selfe any thing of her that was inconsist<e>nt with her profession or unsuitable to christianity either in word deed or conuersation and am straingly surprized that any person should speake or thinke of her as one worthy to be Susspected of any such crime that she is now charged with   (*RSWH*, no. 315)

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4.   In the passage in (6), one might argue that the qualities described are not only or primarily observable, but that they also require deduction, which would move the evidential closer to the Inference or Assumption category; see 7.3.3 and 7.3.4.

"Negated evidentials" are usually left out of studies of evidentiality (Whitt 2010: 79; Grund 2012a: 13), and I leave them out of the counts in this study. Indeed, the dynamics of these negated examples seem to be slightly different than for regular evidentials, and "negated evidentials" is likely a misnomer. The markers in (7) do not reveal the deponent William Hubbard's source of information. Rather, they negate the statement about the accused, Sarah Buckley, i.e., that she can be accused of anything unchristian; at the same time, they also negate the source of the information. They thus seem to carry the double duty of refuting both the claims about Buckley and the source of information that has been appealed to. Of course, in this context, the "negated evidentials" may have a limiting function, signaling that Hubbard restricts his testimony to what he himself has heard or seen. However, his further assertion that he is "straingly surprized" that Buckley would have been accused seems to militate against this interpretation. There appears to be a clear stance positioning move here: Hubbard takes up a stance that explicitly disaligns with previous charges against Sarah Buckley and with the accusers who made the charges (Du Bois 2007: 163). This disalignment is underscored by the use of evidentials of vision and hearing, but in a negative sense, responding to the accusers in content as well as linguistic form.

Clearly, visual evidentials can thus both help deponents take up stances that construct them as core members or peripheral and non-members of the Salem trial CoP:[5] they express affiliation as well as disaffiliation (cf. Eckert 2008).

7.3.2.2   *Hearing*

Auditory evidentials are much less common than visual evidentials: 95 out of 525 or 18% of the sensory evidentials refer to hearing, primarily with different constructions involving the verb HEAR (see also Grund 2012a: 20–21). These auditory evidentials are infrequently (16 instances) used to signal hearing a noise or sound (as in 8), and, more commonly (79 instances), to indicate what a deponent claims to have heard someone say (as in 9).

> (8)
> we **heard** yᵉ back dore open   (*RSWH*, no. 604)
>
> (9)
> then and There wee **Heard** Mary warrin seuerall Times say that the Majestrates Might as well Examine Keysars Daughter that had Bin Distracted Many Yeares And take Noatice of what shee said: as well as any of the Afflicted pᵉsons
>
>   (*RSWH*, no. 262)

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5.   Of course, even if those who endorse the accused position themselves as opponents to the working of the Salem CoP, they also work within the CoP to negotiate its joint enterprise (see 3.3.1 and 3.3.2).

The second example (9) is clearly related to the Quotative category in that the deposition indicates that the evidence is based on someone else's report. However, while Quotatives simply signal that something has been said, in constructions with HEAR, there is an obvious additional "hearing" element (Whitt 2010: 10; cf. Claridge 2017: 36; for hearsay, see Section 7.3.5). Although this may seem to be a redundant move, the use of an auditory evidential may have had an emphasis function, and it may tie in with the importance that New Englanders, especially Puritans, afforded to listening. Kamensky (1997: 12–15) argues that listening and being able to accurately report what one had heard was a virtue among New Englanders (especially the Puritans), and a great deal of reliability was attributed to those rehearsed words. To her, "hearfulness" was as important as (or even more important than) "watchfulness" (Kamensky 1997: 12, 47; 1998: 28–29). More specifically, according to Kamensky (1997: 13), "only when ear-witnesses' exact words were accurately restated, closely examined, and carefully weighed could the true aim of Puritan jurisprudence be accomplished." The pragmatic function of indicating something as *heard* rather than simply *told* may thus have been to imply the reliability of the evidence: the witness was there and could hear the very words that the alleged witch used. Considering this importance, marking something as heard is likely to have been taken very seriously. (Whether the witness actually reliably repeated the words without bias is of course another issue.)

Somewhat unexpectedly, the core group of accusers almost never uses this strategy. Members of the group (especially the outer core) frequently report on conversations with alleged witches (often in spectral form), but they do not mark the hearing aspect; rather, they rely on Quotative markers in this context (7.3.5), perhaps because the core group members are usually involved in dialogues with the alleged witch, where marking hearing would be less expected. The primary locus of hearing evidentials is instead found in depositions that report on hearing what the core accusers (and others) say, when the accusers converse with the apparitions of alleged witches or when they claim to be tormented by said apparitions, as in (10) and (11).

> (10)
> I allso **haue. hard** sum of them Complain uery often of hur hurting them with the spindell of a wheel.   (*RSWH*, no. 601)
>
> (11)
> she **heard** sd David Balch often Complaine y^t he was tormented by witches
>   (*RSWH*, no. 556)

These markers are used by a wide range of deponents in depositions written by various recorders. While the deponents could simply have noted that a person made complaints about being bewitched, the hearing evidentials stress that the deponents

were present when the statement was made and that they are reporting first-hand what they overheard. They may thus attempt to tap into the assumptions and expectations about the status of "ear-witnesses," as articulated by Kamensky (1997). At the same time, it is important to recognize that, while these markers represent a claim of first-hand experience, the information is also secondary, as the statement was made by someone else. There is no claim to privileged knowledge and hence a central role, as in the case of the core group's claims of observation of and conversations with spirits; instead, the information provided works primarily to bolster the claims of the core group (and, less frequently, others), stressing the core group members' central role in the CoP (for further discussion, see 8.3).

7.3.3   Inference evidentials

The category of Inference has some relation to the Sensory category in that the deponents' basis for inference frequently seems to be an underlying sensory experience, although its exact nature is usually unclear (Chafe 1986: 266; Bednarek 2006: 657, n. 11; Aijmer 2009: 68, 76). Owing to the added level of interpretation, the evidence can be seen as indirect, rather than direct, as in the case of Sensory evidentials (for this division, see especially Willett 1988: 57). In the Salem documents, Inference is signaled primarily by verbs, including DISCERN, APPEAR, and LOOK, but the primary marker is SEEM (40 out of the 51 instances of Inference evidentials, or 78%), as exemplified in (12) and (13) (for further discussion of the linguistic features expressing inference, see Grund 2012a: 21–22).

Inferential evidentials in general and SEEM in particular are found in two main contexts: descriptions of physical states and discussions of mental properties, including people's or animals' health condition or state of mind (cf. 6.3.2.6, 6.3.2.7). Illustrative examples are found in (12) and (13).

> (12)
> it **semed** to be sumthing Like a Littell Doge   (*RSWH*, no. 40)
>
> (13)
> we whos nams are under written: can<e> testiefie if cald to it that goodde nurs haue bene trobled with an Infirmity of body for many years which the Juree of wemen **seme** to be Afraid it should be some{thing} Elce   (*RSWH*, no. 294)

In descriptions of physical events (as in 12), SEEM usually indicates an observable event or state that the deponent is unclear about how to interpret. In examples such as (13), however, it is less clear that the inference is based on observation or observation alone. The deponents may of course have seen the reaction of the jury of women, who were convened to perform a physical examination of a woman to discover so-called witches' teats, which would have been seen as a sure sign of

allegiance with the Devil (Hoffer 1997: 103). Since it is unlikely that the deponents of (13) were present during the examination, it is more likely that the ultimate basis for the inference is the report of the jury or what they have heard about the jury's deliberations (exactly how is unknown). According to Aikhenvald (2004: 373–374), discussions of other people's "internal states" (such as the one in 13) are often marked with inferential evidentials in other languages as well.

In both cases, the depositions highlight that the source of the information is indirect: they indicate a level of interpretation rather than a simple statement of direct observation. A number of studies suggest that SEEM in these kinds of contexts in Present-Day English (especially with infinitival complementation, as in 12 and 13) functions as a hedge, marking doubt or reservation (Aijmer 2009: 76; also Gisborne and Holmes 2007: 10–11; Aikhenvald 2004: 165, 373). Similar stance moves are undoubtedly at work in the Salem documents as well. The depositions do not portray the deponents as taking full responsibility for the information; in other words, the deponents do not make categorical assertions, such as *It was a little black dog* or *The jury of women is afraid that it should be something else*. The deponents and/or recorders may have recognized that categorical statements about other people's mental state would likely have been met with some suspicion: how could the deponents possibly know their fellow New Englanders' state of mind? Using an inferential may thus have been natural to avoid challenges.

At the same time, while justified and conscientious, such hedging may also have been detrimental to the testimony. Research on present-day legal contexts suggests that hedging works against the credibility of deponents. O'Barr (1982: ch. 5, esp., 67–75) has famously argued that witnesses in present-day trials who use a relatively large number of features such as hedges and hesitation markers may be seen as less credible than witnesses who use fewer indicators of that kind (see also Morrill and Facciola 1992; Holtgraves and Lasky 1999). This claim is based on experimentation where informants were asked to rank the convincingness, competence, trustworthiness, etc. of witnesses that were using what O'Barr (1982) termed a "powerful" or "powerless" style. The styles were delineated on the basis of the use or lack of use of intensifiers, hedges, hesitation forms, polite forms, and a range of other features. The use of inferential evidentials (especially when expressing less than certainty about the nature of an event) may thus have contributed to diminished credibility.[6] This comparison should of course not be taken as more than a mere suggestion, as many caveats apply. O'Barr (1982) dealt with a different "genre," consisting in constructed witness statements recorded and listened to by the evaluators. Furthermore, it is not clear whether hedges carried the same negative connotations

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6. It is quite possible that such "hedging" (if that is how it was perceived) could have been conscious, in order to avoid saying something damning about neighbors or friends.

in a seventeenth-century legal context, and we do not know how these hedges interact with other linguistic features (with negative and positive connotations).[7] Although the impact can never be assessed with confidence, the relative scarcity of inferential markers may perhaps be an indication that people recognized the problems of hedging, even if it was for legitimate reasons (cf. Stygall 1994: 142).[8]

It is also significant that inferential markers are almost never found in depositions by the core group of accusers, and never in the context of spectral evidence (in the core group depositions or elsewhere). As noted above, there are of course other means of hedging and expressing uncertainty, but such markers are also strikingly absent from these depositions and contexts (see Chapter 8). The lack of inferential markers in these depositions is thus likely another indication that they were seen as incongruent with the case for credibility, reliability, and centrality in the CoP that some of the depositions were claiming for their deponents (whether instigated by the deponents themselves and/or the recorders).

7.3.4 Assumption evidentials

The Assumption category comprises markers that signal the deponents' mental faculties as the source of the information. Included in the category are expressions of understanding, thinking, belief, remembrance, judgment, knowledge, etc. The Assumption evidentials are predominantly verb phrases, including APPREHEND, BELIEVE, CONCEIVE, JUDGE, KNOW, REMEMBER, THINK, and UNDERSTAND (for a discussion of other linguistic constructions, see Grund 2012a: 23–24).

The Assumption category is clearly related to Inference in that the evidence is indirect compared to the direct experience indicated by Sensory evidentials (Willett 1988: 57). It is thus tempting to see Assumption marking as having clear epistemic extensions of uncertainty and doubt, similar to many of the examples of inferential SEEM. After all, the evidence presented is the deponents' (subjective) assessment of an event or phenomenon, not their direct observation of it. They would thus

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7. Some scholars of forensic linguistics have also challenged O'Barr's (1982) framework (e.g., Thompson 2002), questioning various aspects of the methodology and assumptions, and some have obtained results that contradict O'Barr's (1982) findings, although supporting evidence is also plentiful (see Morrill and Facciola 1992: 193–197). And of course, in Chapter 6, I argued that "intensifiers" were used to promote and strengthen an accusation and the role of an accuser, which is the opposite effect of what O'Barr (1982) argues for modern legal contexts.

8. Some features, such as hesitations (e.g., modern *um* and *eh*) and discourse markers (e.g., modern *well*, *I mean*), which can act as hedges in some contexts, may of course never have been written down although they were used by the deponents (cf. Grund 2007a; Kytö and Walker 2003: 225).

fall under O'Barr's (1982) "powerless" style features, if such a concept is valid for seventeenth-century Salem. However, although some examples appear to mark that the deponents have limited knowledge or that they have reservations about the veracity of the statement, others seem to have the opposite function: to mark emphasis, certainty, and conviction. The interpretation very much depends on the construction used and the context of the usage (cf. Holmes 1990: 187). Assumption evidentials must thus be seen as potential hedges as well as potential boosters: they have indexical fields (Eckert 2008) whose values can be exploited for various contextual and communicative goals (see 4.2.2).

When the evidential is in the form of a prepositional phrase or in the form of a verb phrase within a comment clause (e.g. *as I judged*, *as far as I know*; Brinton 2008), the depositions may highlight the deponents' limited scope of knowledge (see also Grund 2013: 336–337). The markers signal that the information can potentially be interpreted differently or that the deponents may have made a mistake, as in (14) and (15).

> (14)
> he put out his hand among the clothes and took hold of her hand and brought it vp to his mouth and bitt three of the fingers (as he **Judg**) to the breaking of the bones
> (*RSWH*, no. 139)

> (15)
> I this Deponant doe testife yᵗ **to yᵉ Best of my vnderstanding** was yᵉ same mare yᵗ James Hough Junio<r> Belonging to Ipswich farmes husband To Elizabeth Hough. would haue haue Borowed of yᵉ sᵈ Comings   (*RSWH*, no. 396)

In (14), by the inclusion of the comment clause, the deposition suggests that the statement of "three of the fingers" is an estimation and hence uncertain; it leaves room for the possibility that it may have been more or fewer. Alternatively, it may suggest that the deponent thinks he bit so hard that the bones broke. Similarly, in (15), the statement is not categorical, but limited to the deponent's understanding of the current situation and of the events reported on previously in the deposition (not included in the example). If indeed these formulations are hedges, they may fall under the same category as inferential SEEM: they may contribute to less credibility of the evidence and the deponent (cf. Stygall's 1994: 138–139, discussion of jurors' reaction to the expression *in my opinion*). However, the same caveats as discussed in the section of Inference apply (see also 8.5 for a different interpretation).

As in the case of the inferential markers, Assumption markers that can be interpreted as downtoning or hedging are virtually non-existent in the core group depositions and in depositions by aspiring core group members. Instead, as we shall see below, when Assumption markers are found in those depositions they tap into other associations of marking something as known, believed, and understood.

Unlike the core (and related) accusers, some of the other deponents often highlight their interpretation rather than direct experience of an unexplained event or encounter. In other words, where core accusers highlight their visual experiences with Sensory markers, other deponents frequently – and in complicated ways – mediate the experience, as in (16)–(18).

(16)
Wᵐ Allin Saith yᵗ on yᵉ 1ˢᵗ of March att night he heard a strange noyse not useually heard and so Continued for many times so yᵗ hee was afrighted and Comeing nearer to it he there saw a strange and unuseall beast lyeing on the Grownd so yᵗ goeing up to it yᵉ sᵈ Beast vanished away and in yᵉ sᵈ place starte up 2 or 3 weemen and flew from mee not after yᵉ manner of other weemen but swiftly uanished away out of our sight which weemen wee **took** to bee Sarah Good Sarah Osburne and Tittabe   (*RSWH*, no. 14)

(17)
I **thought** I saw goodw Jackson and widow Scott come walking into the chamber with yʳ staves, one of yᵐ came and sat upon me so yᵗ I could not stirr;
                    (*RSWH*, no. 471)

(18)
the hogg follow'd him ~~all the way home~~ and never left him tell he came home, [Hand 2] and haueing a stout dog then with him ["him" written over "mee"], the dog run then away from him ["him" written over "mee"] Leapeing ouer yᵉ fence and Cryeing much, which at other times vsed to Wory any hog well or sufficiently [Reverse] which hog I then **apprehended**, was Either yᵉ Diue<l>l or some Euell thing not a Reall hog, and did then Really Judge or determine in my mind that it was Either Goody parker or by her meenes {& procureing}, feareing yᵗ she is a Witch,   (*RSWH*, no. 268)

In (16), the deponent, William Allen, relates an experience with a "strange and unuseall beast" and mysteriously disappearing women, in other words, a narrative belonging to the group of disease, death, strangeness, and fright depositions (see 5.3.1.1). He does not categorically claim to know the women's identity, but marks it as an assumption on his part. Exactly what led to this assumption is uncertain, but he was likely influenced by the recent accusations against Good, Osburn, and Tituba, the first victims of accusations at Salem.

Example (17) is similar, but the larger context of the statement also points up the difficulty of interpreting Assumption markers. As we saw in 7.3.2.1, the core accusers frequently mark alleged attacks by witches or their apparitions with Sensory markers. Here, the deposition by Mary Daniel, a young woman, provides the same kind of framing, but the visual experience is mediated by *thought*. This would seem to downplay the certainty of the claim. At the same time, it is unclear whether that is how it would have been received. The deposition as a whole relates

several alleged experiences that Daniel had with Margaret Scott. Before making the statement in (17), in connection with a different encounter, Daniel firmly states: "I saw apparently the shape of ~~widow~~ [Hand 2] {margret} [Hand 1] Scott,"[9] but adds subsequently "In some of ye fitts y^t I had afterwards, I was sensless and knew not y^t I saw who it was y^t afflicted me" (*RSWH*, no. 471). The latter statement immediately precedes the formulation in (17). In the grand scheme of the message of the deposition, then, the hedging here is just a blip, and Daniel's claims would undoubtedly have been perceived as strong.

A similarly complex example is found in (18), although there are additional nuances here. After the run-in with a persecuting hog that scared off his otherwise fearsome dog, John Westgate (the deponent in 18) concludes that he "apprehended" the hog to be diabolical, or even the Devil himself. As in (17), Westgate does not come down firmly and categorically on the identification; rather, it is according to his apprehension of the event, perhaps leaving some doubt about the accuracy of the claim. At the same time, the deposition follows up with additional Assumption markers, "Judge" and "determine in my mind," offered seemingly to strengthen the sense of his conviction that "it was Either Goody parker or by her meenes {& procureing}." This strong statement is then walked back somewhat by the addition of yet another Assumption marker "feareing," suggesting that Westgate is not completely convinced that she is a witch.

So what do we make of such a conglomeration of Assumption features and the signals they send? The sequence of claims should probably be seen in an order reversed from how it is presented here. The pivotal point is Westgate's suspicion ("feareing") that Alice Parker is a witch. Because of this suspicion, he makes the call that the hog represents or was sent by Parker. This seems to lead back to the earlier "apprehension" that the hog is diabolical. Exactly why Westgate has this "fear" about Parker is not completely clear, although it may be based on Parker's behavior, reported earlier in the deposition by Westgate: she "rails," calls him names, and even threatens him after he takes her husband's side in a marital argument. Such verbal behavior was often seen as suspicious and characteristics of witches, as we have seen in 5.3.2 and as we shall see further in 7.3.4. Overall, then, there is a buildup of Assumptions, resting on little firm ground. What is likely very important is that this grouping of markers occur at the very end of Westgate's deposition, where, despite the mediated impression that this combination makes, it may have been expected and seen as a point of strength, as we shall see below. I return to this issue more globally in 8.3, where I show that expressing uncertainty can strengthen a case because it emphasizes the supernatural and surreal nature of an experience.

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9.   *Apparently* should here be understood in the seventeenth-century meaning of 'clearly, plainly' (*OED*, s.v. *apparently*), and hence a Multal degree modifier boosting *saw* (see 6.3.2).

Other instances of Assumption evidentials can more easily be accounted for as boosters of the reliability or relevance of the report provided in the depositions. This is the case of the use of *know*, in (20).

> (19)
> then I **knew** that it was his apperishtion which I had seen in the morning
> (*RSWH*, no. 121)

Here the witness, Sarah Bibber, a woman who often added her voice to the main accusers' but does not seem to have been part of the core group (see 8.2), stresses her own knowledge as the basis. As in other cases where no marker of evidentiality appears to be necessary, *know* here seems to have important implications beyond simply grounding the statement. It shows that she is actively recognizing that the person who appeared before her previously, without revealing his name, is the same man that she is now seeing as George Burroughs. It is a sign of conviction.

Of course, as with the examples that seem to be more of a downtoning nature above, this example puts front and center the subjectivity, or mediated nature of the statement. As indicated earlier, this would likely make the statement less valuable or even suspicious in the eyes of the modern legal system, in accordance with what is called the "opinion rule," according to Stygall (1994: 138): simply put, non-expert witnesses are expected to report, not to draw conclusions or express opinions. However, the very fact that the Assumption evidentials are subjective and evaluative may have made some of them a crucial part of the deposition narratives. The verb BELIEVE, in particular, which is by far the most common Assumption verb (96 out of 199 verb instances or 48%, in 83 different depositions), appears to serve such a function. BELIEVE is by and large restricted to one particular context: the end of depositions. In this context, the deponents express their strong belief that an accused person is guilty of witchcraft, as in (20) and (21). The belief is frequently underscored by the adverb *verily* ('truly') and/or the prepositional phrase *in my heart*, as we saw in 6.3.2.8. More rarely, THINK occurs in a very similar formulation (22), and other formulations are used with a similar message, as in (18) above.

> (20)
> I do uerily **beliue** that she is a witch (*RSWH*, no. 643)
>
> (21)
> I verily **beleue** in my heart that George Jacobs is a most dreadfull wizzard and that he hath very often afflected and tormented me ~~and mary walcott and Eliz: Hubbrd~~ by his acts of wicthcraft (*RSWH*, no. 134)
>
> (22)
> I veryly **think** he is a wizard & afflicted me by witchcraft (*RSWH*, no. 595)

Preceding such statements of "belief" are often the deponents' reports on both seeing and conversing with the alleged witch in spectral form. The insistence on meticulously recording the deponent's subjective belief would thus seem unnecessary: a report of their sensory experience of allegedly horrific tortures (if believed) would presumably have been enough to convict an accused person several times over. The key to the usage may instead lie in the narrative structure. As we saw in 5.2, in Labov and Waletzky's (1967) famous discussion of the structure of present-day oral narratives, one of the central components of a narrative is "evaluation." According to them, narratives must contain an evaluative statement by the narrator that makes clear to the listener what the relevance or point of the narrative is; in other words, the narrator has to avoid the question "So what?" for the narrative to be successful (Labov and Waletzky 1967: 33, 37). With some caveats (see also 5.2), the Salem depositions very much resemble narratives as described by Labov and Waletzky (1967), and the evaluation component is thus highly relevant for the depositions. For the deponents (and the recorders), it would have been crucial to avoid the "So what?" question, because doubt about the relevance of the deposition could presumably have prevented the deposition from being admitted into evidence and considered during the trial. The *believe* formula (as exemplified earlier) can have left no doubt about the deponents' evaluation and the claim of the relevance of the deposition to the case at hand: all of the experiences by the deponents translate into their conviction that the accused is indeed a witch. However, the *believe* formula is also a clear articulation of the deponents' alignment with and the buy-in into the central enterprise of the CoP: the depositions position the evidence as being central for the goal of the trial process and place the deponents as making a central contribution to that process. Many of the instances are also intensified and highlighted through the use of *verily* and/or *in…heart*, adding further textual spotlight, so to speak, on the belief. In other words: if we want to identify and charge witches, I can contribute to that central goal, and here is a person that is certainly a witch.

Of course, the *believe* formula is not used similarly across all categories of depositions, by all recorders, and all deponents. Of the 78 uses of BELIEVE that can be construed as part of a *believe* formula, 60 are used in depositions written by Thomas Putnam and 13 by Simon Willard (who also uses THINK three times in the same context, as in 22). Not surprisingly, perhaps, these formulas are also very much confined to the core group of accusers or those who appear to aspire to be in that group. At the same time, those patterns are not uncomplicated. For Willard, we do not have a comparative group. The *believe* formula appears in a set of depositions that Willard wrote in the capacity as the recorder for the Grand Jury (see 2.2); in other contexts, Willard usually simply records that the witness swore an oath before the jury about the veracity of the earlier deposition. The additional-information depositions were only given by core group and affiliated members.

For Putnam's depositions, on the other hand, we have some comparative material. While the bulk of the depositions that Putnam writes are those for the core group (and some other related accusers), he certainly writes for others. In those depositions, the formula is rare. Where it does occur in addition to the core group is primarily in supporting statements written on behalf of Edward Putnam, John Putnam Jr., Nathaniel Ingersoll, Samuel Parris, and Thomas himself (and in various combinations of these men), as in (23).

> (23)
> we **beleue** in our hearts ["a" written over "r"] that martha Carrier the prizsoner att [first "t" written over "s"] the barr has most dreadfully tormented and most greviously afflected the affore mentioned parsons by acts of wichtcraft
>
> (*RSWH*, no. 467)

In other words, these supporting statements echo the evidential marker as found in depositions by the core and affiliated groups. By doing so, they reinforce not only the report in core accuser depositions, but also the linguistic strategies used by these deponents (see 8.3).[10]

Clearly, this formula was in no way required, and there are undoubtedly other factors that played into the perception of the importance and credibility of the evidence. However, the deponents positioning themselves and highlighting their evidence as congruent with the goals of the CoP (i.e., to ferret out and bring alleged witches to trial) was arguably a calculated move. In other words, the deponents played to the perceived expectations of the officials or tried to constrain the officials' responses to the evidence they were presenting: the evidence I have presented bears the hallmark of witchcraft and hence the person in question is a witch.

7.3.5   Quotative evidentials

In many ways, the Quotative category is the most complex. The Salem depositions frequently contain several discourse layers and a mixture of the deponents' narrative and their reports on discussions that they have overheard or participated in, cast as direct or indirect speech (Grund et al. 2009: 67; cf. Grund and Walker 2011: 38–56; see 4.2.2). These reported discussions come in various guises including

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10. Contemporaneous legal texts from England, especially witness depositions, included in the *Corpus of English Dialogues 1560–1760* (CED) and *An Electronic Text Edition of Depositions 1560–1760* (ETED) show some evidence of *believe* formulas similar to those used in Salem, and the use here may thus be part of legal convention. If it was, it certainly was not exploited by everybody, as shown in these recorder and deponent patterns.

straightforward statements, dialogues, questions and answers, predictions, and hypothetical statements, all introduced with phrases that could be interpreted as Quotative evidentials. I have treated some of these complexities in detail elsewhere (Grund 2012a: 26–28), and here I adopt the expansive view suggested there. In other words, I include any textual string in the deposition that could be seen as information (whether in the form of a statement, question, claim) and that could be indicated as coming from a source. Especially in a society that afforded a great deal of importance to language, marking something as spoken by someone else (even if it is a question or command) would allow others to evaluate the language or the implications of the language allegedly used by a second party. As with all the other categories, Quotatives are predominantly realized as verb phrases (751 of 774 instances, or 97%), which include a wide range of verbs of saying, such as AFFIRM, COMPLAIN, DECLARE, INFORM, and TESTIFY (for more information on linguistic constructions, see Grund 2012a: 28–29).

As noted in 7.2, there are two overarching types of Quotatives: with a specific source and without a specific source, as in (24) and (25). In (24), we do not learn who had reported Willard's abuse of his wife, while (25) makes clear that the source of the report is the alleged apparition of Rebecca Nurse (or at least the statement is attributed to it).

> (24)
> I being at Groaton. some short tyme after John Willard. as **the report went** had beaten his wife I went to cal him home   (*RSWH*, no. 485)

> (25)
> and on the 3^d of may in the euening the Apperishtion of Rebekah nurs **told** me she had a hand in the deaths of Benjamin Holton John Harrod Rebekah Sheppard. and seuerall others   (*RSWH*, no. 292)

The two Quotative types appear at opposite ends of the frequency scale. Quotatives with a specific source account for as many as 756 instances out of 774 (or 98%), while Quotatives without a specific source represent 2% (18 of 774 instances). The sparse references to non-specific sources may signal that deponents (and/or recorders) perceived the potential weakness of such sources. There may be some support for this hypothesis even in passages where we do find Quotatives with no specific source. Usually the evidence pertains to peripheral information that is not crucial for the main story line or that does not form a major part of the allegation. For instance, example (24) represents the first sentence in Thomas Bailey's testimony, which revolves around some noises that Bailey heard when walking with the accused John Willard. The domestic abuse that is alluded to in passing does not resurface again: the information thus seems to be backgrounded. Perhaps because

of its background status, highlighting it as without a specific source was less risky or indeed of no concern since the information was only tangential to the real case at hand: Willard's alleged wizard status.

Since Quotatives with a specific source widely outstrip the other category, I focus on this category in exploring the stance functions that Quotative evidentials can perform. An inspection of these functions reveals that Quotative evidentials with a specific source cover the same kind of range that Assumption evidentials do, and the interpretation is highly dependent on context. Prominent among these functions seems to be the shifting of responsibility for the statement from the deponent to someone else, which may have several different stance implications. In (26), for example, by attributing the statement explicitly to George Burroughs (the accused), the deponent underscores that Burroughs himself confessed to making a woman a witch.

> (26)
> also he **tould** me that he made: Abigaill Hoobs: a wicth   (*RSWH*, no. 124)

Putting the words into the mouth of the accused probably added to the believability of the case, especially in a society that put a great deal of weight on accurately rehearsed words, as Kamensky (1997: 12–15; 1998: 40–41) suggests. Indeed, Kamensky (1997: 152–54, 160) argues convincingly that language and words were a central part of witch trials; men and women were believed to reveal themselves as witches and wizards and to be in league with the Devil through their use of language that did not fit especially Puritan norms (including cursing, lying, threats, etc.; cf. Culpeper and Semino 2000). Paying close attention to what people said was thus crucial for ferreting out potential witches, and as we saw in 5.3.2, deponents do highlight and evaluate alleged witches' verbal behavior. The belief in the power of language may go a long way toward accounting for the frequency with which words are ascribed to or reported as given by alleged witches and apparitions in the Salem depositions. In other words, marking something as said taps into New Englanders' expectations about and belief in words and language more generally as evidence (cf. Kamensky 1998: 40–41).

At the same time, there is arguably more to this usage. This becomes evident when we consider who uses Quotatives and what kinds of conversations or information are signaled with the help of such evidentials. Quotatives are found across different categories of deponents and recorders, which, again, likely indicates the importance afforded reporting what others have said. In depositions outside those of the core accusers and associated deponents, deponents mostly report on their own conversations with others, what they have been told by someone, or what they have overheard, frequently from or regarding an accused or one of the core accusers, as seen in (27) and (28).

(27)

when this land Came to be laied out goodwiffe Carrier was very Angery, & **said** that she would stick as Close to Beniamin Abbut as the bark stooke to the Tree. & that I ["I" written over "he"] should Repent of it afore seauen years Came to an E{a}nd & that doctor prescott Could Neuer Cure ~~hime~~:   (*RSWH*, no. 463)

(28)

accordingly I went: and found Abigail williams along with ann putnam: and brought them both to se mircy lewes: and as they ware a goeing along the way both of them **said** that they saw the Apperishtion of Gooddy Estick and **said** it was the same woman that was sent whom the other day: and **said** also that they saw the Apperishtion of the other woman that appered with gooddy estick the othr day. and both of them also **said** that the Apperishtion of gooddy ∧{Estick} tould them that now she was afflecting of mircy lewes: and when they came to Mircy lewes both of them **said** that they saw the Apperishtion of gooddy Estick and Jnᵒ willard and mary witheridge afflecting the body of mircy lewes: (*RSWH*, no. 204)

In (27), Benjamin Abbot reports on the words spoken by the alleged witch Martha Carrier. The reported speech is laced with the kind of language that was seen as characteristic of witches, here a string of threats. Although Abbot could have summarized the purported speech by simply indicating that Carrier threatened him, the detail is clearly important. The deposition goes on to relate the severe medical issues that Abbot suffered afterwards, which the doctor could not alleviate despite several gruesome procedures. Not until Carrier was arrested were his ailments miraculously cured. Repeating the alleged words uttered by Carrier thus gives the authorities the opportunity to interpret how the threatening words mapped onto the subsequent, claimed reality. The deponent does not need to make the interpretation for the authorities; they can make the obvious deductions themselves (for this kind of "ceding" of interpretation, see also Collins 2001: 70; Walker and Grund 2017: 23).

The dynamics of (28) are slightly different. The deposition of Samuel Abbey reports on what two of the core accusers, Abigail Williams and Ann Putnam Jr., said when Abbey fetched them to help evaluate the torments of a third core accuser, Mercy Lewis. Here, by rehearsing what Williams and Putnam said, Abbey arguably reinforces the case put forward by the two core accusers. Even if aspects of this testimony would undoubtedly have been ruled out as hearsay in a modern courtroom, present-day legal conventions in this regard did not fully apply (if at all), as we shall see below. Indeed, as shown by the annotation of Abbey's deposition as "Jurat in Curia" ('swears in court') by the court clerk Stephen Sewall, it was admitted as evidence during trial (see also 8.3).

In the depositions by the core accusers and others who claim spectral evidence, we see a different pattern. Here we find sometimes extensive reports on statements

by and conversations with apparitions of alleged witches and even their alleged victims. Examples (29) and (30) illustrate the complexity of such conversations (also 26 above).

> (29)
> in the latteer end of April 1692 there appered to me the Apperishtion of a short old woman which **tould** me hir name was gooddy mat<i>[Lost] [= Martin] and that she came from Ambery who did most greviously torment me by by biting and pinching me urging me vehemetly to writ in hir book   (*RSWH*, no. 108)

> (30)
> then he **tould** me that his Two first wiues would appear to me presently and tell me a grat many lyes but I should not beleue them: then Immediatly appeared to me the forme of Two women in winding sheats and napkins about their heads: att which I was gratly affrighted: and they turned their faces towards Mr Burroughs and looked very red and ang<u>ry and **tould** him that he had been a cruell man to them. and that their blood did crie for vengance against him: and also **tould** him that they should be cloathed with white Robes in heauen when he should be cast into hell: and Immediatly he vanished away: and as soon as he was gon the Two women turned their faces towards me and looked as pail as as a white wall: and **tould** me that they ware mr. Burroughs Two first wiues and that he had mur-thered them: and one **tould** me that she was his first wife and he stabed hir under the left Arme and put a peace of sealing wax on the wound and she pulled aside the winding sheat and shewed me the place<?> and also **tould** me that she was in the house where Mr. parish now liued w^n it was don and the other **tould** me that Mr Burroughs and that wife which he hath now kiled hir ∧{in the vessell as she was coming to se hir friends} because they would haue one another. and they both charged me that I should tell these things to the Majestraits before Mr Burroughs ∧{face} and if he did not own them they did not know but that they should appere there ["re" written over "ir"]: thes moring [= morning] also M^{is} Lawson and hir daughter Ann appeared to me whom I knew: and **tould** me that Mr Burroughs murthered them: (*RSWH*, no. 125)

Example (29) represents a frequent context for Quotatives, where core accusers, especially in depositions penned by Thomas Putnam, report at the very beginning of their testimony that the assaulting apparition revealed their name and abode to the victim. Even if we approach the testimony as sound evidence (which of course it is not), it would seem a peculiar move on the part of the alleged apparition: why would they want to reveal their identity in such detail? Whether authorities reacted to this peculiarity, we cannot know.[11] But, just as attributing speech to the

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11. This particular deposition was not admitted into evidence at the trial, but others that contain the same formulations were.

apparition served a function (indicated above and discussed more below), having the apparitions reveal their own name and other information was an important rhetorical move for the core accusers. Many of the accused came not from Salem Village, where most of the core accusers were based, but from adjacent communities (such as Susannah Martin from Amesbury in 29), and the accusers would have been unlikely to have met them before. By reporting that the accused volunteered the information, the accusers could avoid a challenge to how they could know the identity of their attacker and how they could be so certain of who it was.

More complex are examples such as (30). Here we are treated to an extensive representation of what an alleged apparition (George Burroughs) said to his victim, and, additionally, what two "ghosts" reported about their own deaths. Here Burroughs presages the appearance of his two deceased wives, who will "tell [the deponent] a grat many lyes." They indeed appear and accuse Burroughs, tell the deponent of the explicit details of their murders, and charge her to tell the magistrates "before Mr Burroughs ∧{face}." And if he does not confess, they menacingly suggest that they may appear during the proceedings. This extraordinary framing of the testimony allows the deponent simply to be a vessel for the accusations that are construed as coming from the victims themselves!

While the two examples (29 and 30) are quite different in length and detail, what they share is a clear signal of privileged information. Even if the accused refuse to acknowledge their guilt as they are being interrogated, they have revealed to the "victims" of their attacks all the atrocities that they have committed, are committing, and plan on committing. Clearly, deponents who can provide such evidence have a particular position in the central pursuit of the Salem CoP, as they possess "evidence" that point to actionable charges of performing witchcraft and even murdering innocents, and premeditation to boot. What we see here then is a similar move as we saw in the case of visual evidentials: the core accusers and some of the associated witnesses claim a role for themselves as part of the central members of the CoP. However, there are also distinct patterns among the core and related accusers. For example, the inner circle core accusers (such as Ann Putnam Jr. and Elizabeth Hubbard) usually use conversations with specters and spirits as a device secondary to emphasizing their own suffering and the witnessing of other core accusers' suffering. Outer circle accusers (and some others), such as Susannah Shelden, on the other hand, make this the core framing device for their evidence. Making it the pivotal point does not appear to have been entirely successful, however. Depositions that focus on such evidence were only infrequently used as evidence at the Grand Jury or trial hearings (see 8.2).

Allowing others to be the basis of the information provided is clearly the most prominent function of Quotative usage, but we also find instances where usage may

instead signal disassociation from the statement and suggest that the statement may be uncertain or even false (cf. Biber 2004: 111; Martin and White 2005: 113–114). This strategy may be behind the usage in (31).

> (31)
> our dog bit hir by the leg **as she said**   (*RSWH*, no. 351)

Although Susannah Martin, an alleged witch, claimed that she had been bitten by the dog, the deponent, Elizabeth Clark, implies that Martin's statement is false, that she simply made it up. After all, Clark is not reporting the incident as fact (*Our dog bit her by the leg*). Similar uses of Quotatives are found in a number of other languages (Aikhenvald 2004: 180, 182, 375). This usage is not found in depositions by the core accusers, who instead reveal the kind of usage shown in (29) and (30).

One aspect of Quotatives that has surfaced several times in the examples and discussion remains to be explored: hearsay. From a modern perspective, the frequent references to what other people have told the deponents are surprising. In a present-day courtroom (at least in the United States), many of the statements that are supported with Quotatives in the Salem depositions would be inadmissible: they would be viewed as hearsay, since the deponents do not claim to have first-hand knowledge of the claims of the statements; they are simply rehearsing the experiences of others (*Black's Law Dictionary* s.v. *hearsay*; Stygall 1994: 138). However, the attitude towards hearsay was different in the seventeenth century, where the notion was quite complicated and in flux, as shown by Langbein (2003). Although objections were sometimes voiced in seventeenth-century trials, it is not until the mid-eighteenth century that a clearly negative attitude to hearsay evidence emerges in the legal system in England (Langbein 2003: 233–242). The situation in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, on the other hand, is unclear, and little seems to have been written on the hearsay rule in early colonial times.[12]

There is both direct and indirect support for the claim that hearsay was readily accepted in Salem, and that hearsay was thus treated in a similar way as in England. As we saw in 2.2, a number of practical guides and law books were available to the Salem magistrates on which to base their proceedings. One of the prime sources is likely to have been Michael Dalton's *A Country Justice*, first issued in 1618 and re-issued in a number of subsequent editions in the seventeenth century (Hoffer 1998: 7; Rosenthal 2009: 18). The 1690 edition, the latest edition at the time of the Salem trials, does not appear to include a discussion of hearsay per se. However, in

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12. I am grateful to Prof. David Konig (Washington University, St. Louis), who is an expert on early American legal history, for pointing me to Langbein's (2003) treatment of hearsay and for his comment on the lack of studies in an American context (personal communication August 11, 2011).

the description of different categories of witnesses, Dalton (1690: 408) notes that "[i]f one be an Accuser upon his own knowledge, sight or hearing, and he shall utter the same to another, that other may be an Accuser." This at least seems to imply that the evidence put forward by this second accuser, even if secondary, would be accepted, and hence that the Salem magistrates would have had precedent for using such evidence.

More directly, the depositions themselves attest to the practice of considering hearsay as legitimate evidence. As noted earlier (esp. 2.5), the annotation *jurat in curia* 'swears in court' (or sometimes simply *jurat* or even *sworn*) normally reveals that a deposition was used at trial, where it would have been read aloud and sworn to by the deponent. Not all extant depositions carry this phrase, but many that contain what we would now refer to as hearsay evidence do. Example (32) is an illustrative instance (also *RSWH*, no. 446). After about 20 lines of texts (not quoted here), the deponents reveal that they have no first-hand knowledge at all of the events; instead, it is simply a report of what Joanna Hoar told the deponents about her experiences, as illustrated in (32). Notwithstanding the second-hand nature of the evidence, the deposition was apparently admitted into evidence during the trial of Dorcas Hoar and sworn to in court (indicated by the "Jurat in Curia" at the end).

> (32)
> {no<te>}: **this aboue written was decleard to the two aboue said deponants at the hows of Thomas Cox by Jone Hoar daughter to dorkes**: and farther saith not
> [Hand 2] Jurat in Curia.   (*RSWH*, no. 155)

Despite our modern objections to this kind of evidence, then, it is clear that it was frequently used and that the use was probably sanctioned by legal procedure. More generally, the frequency and standing of reported evidence may again be related to the importance afforded to speech and hearing in New England (as suggested by Kamensky 1997: 12–15): if listening and rehearsing words was a valued skill, it may have been natural to at least consider re-tellings of other people's experiences as valid evidence. The frequency of occurrences shows that a more important distinction for the Salem authorities or the community at large may have been the one between statements with a specific source and those without a specific source: the number of the latter category is very limited and the examples are mostly peripheral, as shown above.

It is also important to stress that speech representations and concomitant Quotatives were deployed strategically for stance purposes by especially the core and related accusers. And I use the term "deploy" deliberately. The lengthy, revealing, and fanciful conversations that the accusers purported to have with witches, wizards, and their previous victims were clearly made up (or possibly imagined, if we very charitably interpret the accusers as delusional; e.g., Rosenthal 1993: 32–40;

Ray 2015: 44–65). That is, the core accusers or the recorders of their testimonies had the option of framing the evidence in other ways, but they chose to highlight the evidence as emerging from the accused themselves. As such, these Quotatives were arguably part of a strategy to claim prestige and standing for the accusers within the Salem CoP. Although it is not entirely clear how successful this strategy was, the implication appears to be that other deponents (who relate inexplicable loss of cattle or strange occurrences) could not possibly provide as damning evidence (if believed) as the alleged witches' own confession of guilt and the accusations of murder by the witches' own victims. We thus again find the kind of stance moves that we have seen in earlier sections of this chapter and will see again as we consider the stance profiles of different groups of depositions, deponents, and recorders in Chapter 8.

7.4   Conclusion

The evidence that the Salem deponents present clearly stems from different kinds of experiences or claimed experiences with witchcraft, an alleged witch, or some mysterious event. Some purport to have first-hand experience through sight or hearing, while others indicate a more mediated or vague source, such as remembrance or knowledge. Yet others "allow" the alleged perpetrators or their victims to speak for themselves by reporting detailed dialogues and conversations. And, of course, some depositions leave the source of information obscure or unstated, which can also have important implications, as I show in Chapter 8. Overall, what emerges from this is a complex picture of stance work. By marking the information that they allege to possess as having a particular source, the deponents (and/or the recorders of their testimonies) position the evidence and themselves in significant ways, whether downtoning or hedging their information or underscoring its importance and the deponents' role in the enterprise of the Salem trial CoP. Most notably, the depositions by the core and associated accusers insist on the privileged knowledge that the deponents possess, especially through sight (or hearing) and through conversations with or statements from alleged witches and their former victims. Not only is this a signal that the depositions attempt to present the evidence as certain, believable, and factual, but also that they attempt to situate the deponents as especially believable and central to the process and the CoP formed around the trials. Of course, it would seem peculiar to us that these reports of seeing and experiencing spectral affliction and apparitions and of fanciful dialogues and conversations with specters would be believed. However, we must recognize that accepting and believing in spectral evidence was in many ways congruent with the

world view of most New Englanders. To be sure, there were doubters at all levels of the community (see 1.3). We witness some push back in the depositions endorsing the accused, notably evidencing the same kind of evidential and stance moves as the accusers but for opposite purposes: of disaligning with or disrupting the CoP. With such criticism and pushback, it is useful to see some of the strategies, such as the insistent marking of apparitions and their alleged attacks on innocents as *seen*, as part of a strategy of making spectral evidence more palatable and acceptable. In other words, as we have seen elsewhere, what matters is not only *what* the deponents said but *how* they said it.

"we perceiued hir hellish temtations by hir loud outcries"
Stance profiles

8.1   Introduction

In the previous chapters, we have seen how individual stance features or strategies of stance are deployed for a range of sociopragmatic purposes, local as well as more wide-ranging.[1] It is clear, however, that these stance moves do not work in isolation but are often part of a complex web of choices, arguably mostly very conscious ones, that constructs profiles of stance. These stance profiles send a very particular message about how the deponents and/or recorders want the evidence to be perceived and how the witnesses position themselves (or are positioned) within the trial process, within the Salem trial CoP, and vis-à-vis each other. And there are significant differences in this regard among the depositions and deponents, and the stance profiles in some cases respond very clearly to each other, with effects of aligning or disaligning deponents. In (1), for example, Thomas and Edward Putnam provide testimony supporting Mercy Lewis's earlier deposition, which appears in the same physical document.

> (1)
> [Hand 1] we whose names are under writen being present hard mircy lewes declare what is aboue writen what she said she saw and hard from the Apperishtion of Mr George Burroughs: and also beheld hir tortors which we cannot exppress for sume times we ware redy to fear that euery joynt of hir body was redy to be displaced: allso we perceiued hir hellish temtations by hir loud outcries Mr. Burroughs I will not writ in your book tho you doe kil me   (*RSWH*, no. 124)

When read in conjunction with Lewis's deposition, there is little new information presented in this supporting deposition that is of significant, substantive evidentiary value; instead, these two prominent men in the community underwrite Lewis's deposition using evidential strategies (*heard…declare*, *beheld*, *perceived*) and expressions of emphasis and boosting (*hellish*, *which we cannot express*), among other

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1.   The chapter title quote comes from *RSWH*, no. 124.

features, that are clearly aimed to bolster her case. Of course, they do not address the underlying issue of whether Lewis's account is accurate, but align very actively with her and her narrative. There are striking patterns in how these endorsing stances are constructed, and a very different picture emerges when we focus on the stances of depositions that endorse the accused, which disalign the deponents, implicitly or very explicitly, with the accusers.

While I focus in this chapter on broader trends among groupings of depositions, deponents, and recorders, there is rich material for investigations of individuals, especially in cases where multiple depositions survive given by or attributed to a particular deponent. Such in-depth scrutiny of the depositions awaits future research. At the same time, I explore individual contributions in some cases, especially as regards the recorders of the testimonies, where such contributions have a significant, general impact on the patterns that we see. This is especially the case of Thomas Putnam, who (co-)recorded ca. 130 of the 457 depositions. As has been hinted in previous chapters and as will be discussed more fully in this chapter, his role looms large in how we understand stance in the Salem documents, even in documents that he did not record.

In constructing the stance profiles of the depositions and pulling out the implications of the profiles in this chapter, I bring together the stance features I have outlined in Chapters 5–7, and I add discussions of additional, more infrequent, but still significant stance features (including "vague language," negation, and ability/lack of ability). I structure the discussion according to deposition type, and by extension deponent grouping and recorder. While there is overlap among the deposition types, they are also distinct both qualitatively and quantitatively in terms of stance. Overall, what this chapter brings home is that what mattered in this trial process is not only *what* was said, but very much *how* it was said. To use a well-worn phrase, the medium is often the message (or at least a significant part of it).

The chapter is organized according to the following deposition types or themes: depositions of affliction (8.2), depositions endorsing the accusers (8.3), depositions of mysterious events, disease, death, and suspicious behavior (8.4), and depositions endorsing the accused (8.5). I then give some concluding remarks in 8.6 that set the scene for the broader picture and final chapter, 9.

8.2 Depositions of affliction

Central in the indictment of witches at Salem was the evidence that alleged direct personal affliction by witchcraft: witnesses claim to have been visited and afflicted, tormented, tortured, bitten, choked, hurt, pinched, pricked, and beaten (among other types of abuse) by an accused in person or, more commonly, in spectral

form (see 1.3, 5.3.1.2). About 200 depositions relate such experiences. At the same time, this is a group with fuzzy boundaries and characteristics. Though affliction remains at the core of the description, the types of experiences and hence narratives differ (e.g., one type emphasizes personal assault, while another foregrounds conversations with specters and ghosts), and patterns emerge for different groups of deponents and recorders. There is some overlap with the depositions discussed in 8.4, as some deponents claim affliction in conjunction with disease, unexplained events, and alleged strange encounters with an accused. Importantly for us, the stance patterns for this group of depositions correlate with group membership and recorder identity, which has a bearing on how we understand the social positioning of the deponents and their evidence (whether the positioning is accomplished by themselves and/or the recorders of their testimonies).

As we saw in 3.3.4 (and as referenced throughout this book), Robinson (1991) suggests that the accusers can be divided into various groups, including a core group, with an inner and outer circle, and other accusers. As I suggested in 3.3.4, the picture is more complicated than Robinson (1991) appears to acknowledge. We see that, while the linguistic stance profiles reinforce this division to some extent, they also complicate groupings and indicate that the language can help us recognize that other groupings are also possible, especially when we view the accusers' positionings through the lens of the recorder. Indeed, Thomas Putnam features prominently in this discussion, as he has in other chapters as well. Whether he put words in the mouths of the accusers or not, his linguistic work emerges as crucial for understanding stance in the Salem CoP in general. In what follows, I use the accuser groupings as a jumping off point to discuss the patterns that emerge in this group, but I mediate the group picture by using the recorder as a secondary guiding principle for the interpretation.

The inner core group of accusers in Robinson's (1991) scheme consists of Elizabeth Hubbard, Ann Putnam Jr., Mercy Lewis, Betty Parris, Mary Walcott, and Abigail Williams. No depositions survive (or ever existed) for Betty Parris, who was sent away early in the trial process to live elsewhere (Hoffer 1996: 103–104), but for the others more than 100 depositions are extant, thus representing almost a quarter of all depositions and about half of this category. These depositions pertain to most, but not all cases, representing the pivotal and usually the initiating evidence against most of the accused, and their depositions are usually followed by case-specific stories of unexplained events, disease, and suspicious behavior claimed by a range of deponents who are mostly tied to particular cases (see 8.4).

As we have seen in all of the previous chapters on individual stance strategies, these depositions often stick out in terms of their stance patterns. Overall, they are characterized by claims of direct visual experience (by SEE) and to some extent their use of quotatives (in relation to conversations with the accused in spectral

form or ghosts), frequent repetition of multal degree modifiers (especially *most grievously* and *most dreadfully*), *almost* in an emphatic use in combination with CHOKE, and use of "afflictive" language (including, especially, AFFLICT, TORMENT, and TORTURE). On the "negative" side, we rarely see stance expressed in relation to emotional responses (such as fright), nor in relation to the accused (in terms of evaluative adjectives and adverbs). We also see little, if any, stance indicating uncertainty, hedging, or downtoning of the experience; instead, the claims of affliction and the identification of an alleged witch are made without hesitation or verbal "flinches." These patterns stand in sharp contrast with some of the "supporting" depositions that include claims of suspicious behavior on the part of an accused, unexplained events, or disease and death, as we shall see further in 8.4.

The inner core group depositions are striking in that they were written by very few recorders: Thomas Putnam (co-)writes the bulk (ca. 70), followed by Simon Willard (ca. 20) and Samuel Parris (about 10); the rest (some 10) were written by six different recorders.[2] The writing is also connected in interesting ways to the identity of the accusers. Parris writes almost exclusively for his niece, Abigail Williams, while Putnam pens depositions for all inner core group members, though notably only once for Williams. Willard, who worked for the Grand Jury, only writes testimony for the inner core deponents (except for Williams) when additional evidence seems to have surfaced at the Grand Jury hearing.[3] While they overlap, the stance strategies found in these depositions very much contrast according to who the recorder is. These overarching patterns are illustrated in (2) written by Putnam, (3) by Parris, and (4) by Willard.

> (2)
> [Hand 1] The deposistion of Eliz: Hubburd agged about 17 years who testifieth and saith I haue been a long time afflected by a woman that tould me hir name was Hoar but one ∧{the} :2: may 1692 Darcas Hoar of Beuerly did most greviously torment me dureing the time of hir Examination and then I saw that it was the very same woman that tould me hir name was Hoar and if she did but look upon me she would strick me down or allmost choak me allso on the day of hir Examination I saw Darcas Hoar or hir Appearance most greviously torment and Afflect the bodys of mary walcott Abigaill williams Ann putnam ~~and Susannah Shelden~~ by biting pinching and almost choaking them to death. also seuerall time senc Darcas Hoar or hir Apperance has most greviously tormented me with variety of tortors

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2.   John Putnam Jr. writes one (*RSWH*, no. 502, for Hubbard and Walcott), and three depositions for Mary Walcott (*RSWH*, nos. 171, 205, 213) may have been written by her brother, Jonathan Walcott Jr., but that attribution still requires confirmation (cf. *RSWH*, no. 210, which is written in the same handwriting).

3.   Most of these Grand Jury depositions appear to have been recorded fairly late in the trial process (post May 1692), when Williams no longer seems to have been an active accuser (see 3.3.4).

and I verily beleue that Darcas hoar the prisoner att the barr is a wicth for sence she has been in prison she or hir Appearance has com to me and most dreadfully tormented with veriety of tortors: which I beleue she could not doe without she ware a wicth   (*RSWH*, no. 403)

(3)

[Hand 1] The Testimony of Abigail Williams witnesseth & saith that she hath sev-erall times seen, & been very much afflicted by the Apparition of Geo: Jacobs Senᵉ of Salem at & before the .11. May. 1692   (*RSWH*, no. 138)

(4)

[Hand 1] <Ma>~~ry~~ Mary Walcot: affirmed to yᵉ Jury of Inquest: that Ann ffoster: of Andouer: has afflicted. her: both: before her examination: and at her examination & since: that time: by biting pinching & choaking of her sᵈ Walcot also: sayth she has: seen her sᵈ ffoster: afflict: Eliz Hubbert: ~~both~~: at yᵉ time of her examination: by choaking & pinching of her: & ~~that~~ I beleev: sᵈ ffoster: is a wicth: & that: she hath afflicted me & Eliz Hubbard by witchcraft:: ~~Septᵉ 13: 16~~ upon: her oath:

(*RSWH*, no. 617)

Parris's and Willard's depositions (in 3 and 4, respectively) are as a rule fairly brief (though see *RSWH*, no. 244, by Parris). They stress the visual basis of the evidence and note the affliction, usually with the verb AFFLICT (but see also 5.3.1.2). Parris's depositions frequently employ the multal degree modifier *very much* (or *greatly*), and Willard's depositions often include a *believe*-formula-like expression.

These patterns are also found in Putnam's depositions, but they are amplified and extended in various ways. We see the characteristic use of multal degree mod-ifiers *most grievously/dreadfully* and *verily*, the stress on visual evidence (signaled by SEE), the *almost* CHOKE collocation, the use of "afflictive" language (TORMENT, TORTURE, as verb and noun, and AFFLICT), and the accused is alleged to reveal herself as a witch (indicated by reporting the revelation as *told*). The experience is then hammered home with a *believe*-formula.

One feature that appears with some frequency in Putnam's depositions (and also Parris's) but which I have not discussed elsewhere is what can be characterized as "vague language." Vague language is "intentionally fuzzy, general, and impre-cise, ha[s] a low semantic content and [is] heavily dependent on shared contextual knowledge for [its] meaning" (Cutting 2012: 284; see also Channell 1994: 20). We see such inexplicit, "fuzzy" language in frequency expressions in particular, includ-ing *several times* (as in 2 and 3) and (*very*) *often* (Channell 1994: 114–115), but we also find it in more qualitative expressions, such as *variety of* (*tortures*), as in (2). These expressions are arguably part of stance strategies. In addition to the affliction, torment, and torture being grievous and dreadful, it is frequent and recurrent; that is, there is a pattern of repeated behavior where the abuse is scaled upwards by multal degree modifiers and by frequent expressions underscoring the afflicteds' suffering (for the intersection of frequency and degree, see also Hasselgård 2010:

31–34, 249). There is a similar frequency implied by *variety of*, but *variety* also signals a qualitative distinction among the *tortures*, suggesting the multifarious nature of the abuse. Again, a consistent picture of varied, unwavering, and extreme affliction is painted. We find such vague language expressions across depositions, but they are particularly frequent in these accuser depositions. And here it is important, of course, to remember that these accusers invented (or co-invented) their stories (charitably interpreted through hallucinations): they added these frequency statements not to reflect reality; they arguably did so to stress their case and victimhood.

We also find straightforward "factual" statements, that is, the depositions present much of the information in declarative sentences that do not provide evidential grounding (though visual and quotatives significantly also occur; see the discussion of "pragmatic scope" of evidentials in 7.3.2.1). Almost never do we find cognitive mediation in the sense that deponents appeal to inference, assumption, memory, and similar cognitive processing, which we find frequently in other depositions (see 8.4). As we saw in 4.2.1, there is some debate about whether such "factual" statements should be seen as part of stance. In the context of the Salem trials, I consider them as part of a strategy of strong commitment. The depositions reflect no hesitation on the part of the deponents: they identify the assailants with little doubt (even if some specters are said to reveal their own identity, as in 2), and there is no mediation or uncertainty expressed about what the nature of the experience is, even if it is spectral. Of course, these kinds of factual statements are found in other deposition types as well, but, while we see virtually no Assumption or Inference evidentials in the inner (or outer) core group depositions, they do appear (sometimes with some frequency) in other depositions, as we shall see in 8.4.

What remains a looming question is to what extent the recorders, and especially Thomas Putnam, created these depositions and the deponents' stance profiles, and the possible implications either way. We do see overlaps in strategies among the recorders represented in examples (2)–(4), but they are not exactly the same. This perhaps suggests that the patterns are recorder specific. However, this assumption is challenged by the fact that the depositions written by the three are not completely comparable: for example, Parris writes only for Williams, while Willard, who records testimony for the same cast as Putnam, writes in a context (Grand Jury) that is not the same as Putnam's (nor Parris's). So other contextual factors could influence the patterns.

At the same time, what is striking is the general homogeneity in content and formulation (including stance) of especially Putnam's depositions for the inner core group (and some others; see Hoffer 1996: 103; 1997: 51). Indeed, identifying ten recurring phrasings (or "building blocks" within his depositions), Hiltunen and Peikola (2007: 59–60) suggest that Putnam's depositions for the inner core accusers follow a "matrix of formulaic phraseology." They even point to the possibility that

Putnam simply copied one deposition from another. Based on their study of depositions written for Ann Putnam Jr., Mercy Lewis, and Mary Walcott, they conclude:

> The evidence discussed above strongly points towards the conclusion that Thomas Putnam's role as the scribe of depositions by Ann Putnam, Jr., Mercy Lewis and Mary Walcott[4] was at times quite different from that of a faithful and unobtrusive recorder. Instead, he emerges as an active shaping force behind their depositions, to a point which suggests that his apparent endeavours to standardise or formularise the girls' statements may sometimes have transgressed the boundary between purely linguistic concerns and concerns about their actual content.
>
> (Hiltunen and Peikola 2007: 60)

While the idea of "building blocks" seems right (cf. Ray 2015: 100), it does not fully give justice to the dynamics found in the depositions by Putnam, and the complex patterns involving grouping, deponent identity, and legal case.[5] Laying out the full complexity of the patterns is beyond the scope of this study, and, most significantly, for understanding the stance language, the idea of building blocks works well. This can be illustrated by the three examples in (5)–(8).

> (5)
> [Hand 1] The Deposistion of Elizabeth Hubburd aged about 17 years who testifieth and saith that on the 27th of february 1691/92 I saw the Apperishtion of Sarah osborn the wife of ~~Ex~~ Allexander osborn who did **most greviously tortor** me by pricking and pinching me **most dreadfully** and so she continewed **hurting** me **most greviously** tell the first of march 1691/92: being the day of hir Examination ∧{~~being first of march~~} and then also Sarah osborn did **tortor** me **most greviously** by pinching and pricking **me most dre<ad>fully** and also seuerall times sence Sarah osborn has **afflected** me and urged me to writ<e> in hir book   (*RSWH*, no. 10)

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4. They subsequently add Hubbard to the list (Hiltunen and Peikola 2007: 60), though her depositions are not discussed in detail, nor are depositions representing other deponents outside this group, which they acknowledge.

5. For example, depositions in particular cases often resemble each other, even if they are not identical, but differ from those of other cases (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 248–250 against Wilmot Redd, and *RSWH*, nos. 26, 27, 44 against Dorothy Good). Accusations against confessors clearly triggered a different kind of deposition, with some formulaic statements not found in other depositions, including attenuation of the accusation with the help of paucal degree modifiers (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 12, 69, 71, 73, 74, 172; see also 6.3.5). The depositions against George Burroughs are much longer and intricate than most other core inner group depositions, perhaps because of the perceived ring-leader status of Burroughs and the need to provide particularly strong and believable accusations (*RSWH*, nos. 124, 125, 129, 457). In a couple of cases, the deposition of one of the group members departs from those of the others (cf, e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 134 and 136, by Mercy Lewis and Ann Putnam Jr. against George Jacobs Sr.; *RSWH*, nos. 180, 184, 185, by Mary Walcott, Mercy Lewis, and Ann Putnam Jr., respectively, where Ann Jr.'s is more "personalized").

(6)

[Hand 1] The Deposistion of Ann putnam who testifieth and saith that on the 25th of ffebruary 1691/92 I saw the Apperishtion of Sarah osborn the wife of ~~E~~ Allexandar osborn who did Immediatly **tortor** me **most greviously** by pinching and pricking me **dreadfully** and so she continewed **most dreadfully to afflect** me tell the first day of march being the day of hir Examination and then also she did **tortor** me **most dreadfully** in the time of hir Examination: and also seuerall times sence ~~good~~ Sarah osburn has **afflected** me and urged me to writ in hir book

(*RSWH*, no. 11)

(7)

[Hand 1] The Deposistion of Elizabeth Hubbard agged about 17 years who testifieth that on the 25th february 1691/92 I saw the Apperishtion of Tituba Indian which did Immediately **most greviously torment** me by pricking pinching and **almost choaking** me: and so continewed **hurting** me **most greviously** by times ~~hurting~~: tell the day of hir Examination being the first of march and then also at the begining of hir Examination: but as soon as she began to confess she left ofe **hurting** me and has **hurt** {<m>e} **but litle** sence   (*RSWH*, no. 12)

(8)

[Hand 1] The deposistion of Ann putnam who testifieth and saith that on the 25th of ffebruary 1691/92 I saw the Apperishtion of Tituba M[r] parishes Indian woman which did **tortor** me **most greviously** by pricking and pinching me **most dread**∧{**fully**} tell the first day of march being the day of hir Examination and then also **most greviously** allso at the begining of hir Examination: but sene [= since] she confesed she has **hurt** {me} ~~be~~ **but little**   (*RSWH*, no. 13)

The repetition of words and phrases is obvious both within each set (5 and 6 against Osborn, and 7 and 8 against Tituba) and across each set. At the same time, these depositions are not identical: some words are left out, or the word order is "scrambled." Significantly, the stance-related wording is flexible and can be deployed variably and still have similar effects, as they can be inserted in various slots. The variation in *grievously* and *dreadfully*, as well as in the "afflictive" words TORMENT, TORTURE, AFFLICT, and HURT that the two adverbs modify, is a good example of how stance words in the depositions can work as flexible building blocks to signal the deponents' assessments and positioning. The exact usage converges as well as diverges, but the stance profile is nevertheless the same or very similar: irrespective of exactly where the stance is expressed, the message is one of emphasizing the deponents' suffering and positioning them as having first-hand, privileged evidence that no one else possesses. There is a claim of centrality, of the evidence and of the deponents in the CoP and its enterprise. In Ray's (2015: 96) words, Putnam "used the most dramatic phrases he could muster, and used them repeatedly."

This kind of use is not directly conclusive, however, in terms of Thomas Putnam's exact role in recording these testimonies. I have suggested elsewhere

(Grund 2020a: 86) that there are several ways of interpreting these patterns in the inner circle core depositions:

> [Putnam] could have produced the depositions without even consulting the actual deponents, hence appropriating their voices for his own purposes. At the same time, alternative explanations are possible. We know from the examination documents, the observers' accounts, and the commentaries that members of the core group behaved very similarly. Perhaps this extended also to their verbal behavior: they colluded to report their experiences in very similar ways to keep the message consistent. Whether they actually used the exact terms as recorded in Putnam's depositions is, of course, another issue. He may have transformed their formulations into something that would capture their narrative in language that was appropriate for the legal context. Such reformulation of oral narrative into witness depositions is not unexpected and probably happened in depositions throughout the Salem corpus. Grund and Walker (2011, 44–56) have shown how this kind of reworking occurred in contemporaneous depositions in England. Yet another possibility is that Putnam simply used a "template" deposition that was changed as necessary, convinced that the specifics were not essential as long as the substance of the accusers' experiences was captured.

There is no definitive way of determining one way or another (as with so many issues in the Salem trials). However, patterns emerge when we look at other sets of depositions for other groups and deponents, written by Putnam and others, that bring us a little closer to outlining Putnam's role and the significance of the varying stance patterns of different deponents and groups of deponents claiming affliction.

According to Robinson (1991), the outer circle of the core accusers consists of Mary Warren, Sarah Churchill, Susannah Shelden, and Elizabeth Booth. As a rule, the depositions by this group (totaling about fifty) are written by a much larger group of recorders, though Simon Willard writes a number of depositions for Mary Warren and Sarah Churchill in a Grand Jury setting, Thomas Putnam writes a few depositions, which will be important for our discussion, and Samuel Parris only has a short addition in one deposition. The stance patterns are overall also significantly different in this group. Particularly interesting in this regard are the depositions filed for Susannah Shelden and Elizabeth Booth. Most of Shelden's and Booth's depositions focus on presenting extensive conversations with purported apparitions of the accused (and their alleged, dead victims).[6] While personal affliction is also usually noted, such description dwarfs in comparison with the often very fanciful stories of specters and ghosts of (long-)dead victims of witchcraft who return to accuse the

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6. Similar patterns are found for Johanna Childen, who Robinson (1991) does not include in his representation (*RSWH*, nos. 289, 326).

specters of the alleged witches (often claimed to be present at the same time) of their murder or mischief and crimes committed by the accused, as seen in (9).

> (9)
> The testimony of Elesebeth. Booth. Aged 18 yer{s} or their about testifieth yᵗ one yᵉ 8 of June Elesebeth Shaw apered vnto me & **told** me yᵗ Elesebeth proctor & John wilard Kiled Her Because she did not vse those doctors. she Advised her too.
>
> Elesebeth. Booth
>
> The testimony of Elesebeth Booth Aged 18. yers. or their about testifieth yᵗ one yᵉ 8. of June yᵉ wife of John felton Apered vnto me & **told** me that Elesebeth proctor Kiled her Because she wold not giue her Aples. when she sent for sum
>
> Elesebeth Booth
>
> (*RSWH*, no. 385)

As I have suggested elsewhere (7.3.5), this kind of move, which of course is accompanied by frequent use of Quotative evidentials, allows the deponents to appear as simple "mouth pieces" for the ghosts or the afflicting specters themselves, who are very forthcoming with self-incriminating evidence. The claim to a special role and privileged information is obvious – who else can present evidence that come from the accused themselves? – but it is not clear how successful this strategy was. Some of the inner circle core accusers cite conversations with specters as well, but they are as a rule brief, with an emphasis instead on their own suffering, highlighted in various ways by their linguistic stance choices. While most of the inner circle depositions were admitted into evidence and used during the Grand Jury hearing and/or trial, Booth's and Shelden's depositions rarely were. *RSWH* (no. 472, note) even suggests that "[n]either Booth nor Susannah Shelden had much credibility" (cf. Trask 2009: 51).

However, what is striking is that when Thomas Putnam writes for these two deponents, their narratives are radically different: they conform very much to the expected model of inner core accuser depositions, most notably in their stance patterns. Comparing the deposition in (10) with the one cited above in (9) is instructive.

> (10)
> [Hand 1] The deposistion of Eliz: Booth ∧{aggd 18 years} who testifieth and saith that sence I haue ben **afflected** I haue been **most greviously tormented** by my neighbor John proctor senʳ or his apperance also I **haue seen** John proctor senʳ or his Apperance **most greviously torment and afflect** mary walcott mercy lewes and ann putnam junʳ by pinching twisting and **almost choaking** them
>
> (*RSWH*, no. 55)

The example reveals the regular hallmarks of inner circle core depositions written by Putnam, including "afflictive" verbs, the degree modifier *most grievously*, and the emphatic use of *almost*. In contrast with many other depositions, this deposition

was accepted into evidence and used at trial (see also *RSWH*, no. 338 for Shelden, and 472 for both, although the latter was not accepted into evidence).[7]

Further telling evidence comes from depositions by accusers who fall outside Robinson's (1991) core group. A number of other deponents claim direct affliction, but as a rule, there are few depositions by the same deponents. Mostly there is one or two (e.g., *RSWH*, no. 643 for Sarah Coleman [see also Grund, Burns, and Peikola 2014]; no. 662 for Mercy Wardwell; 471 for Mary Daniel; 255, 567 for Abigail Hobbs, after confession), although Sarah Bibber has as many as fifteen. These deponents mostly represent young women, but also some young men (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 481, 482, 543, 551 for John DeRich, aged 16). We also find a group of depositions (ca. 15) that describe afflictions, usually in terms of nightly visitations, and these depositions are given by a broader set of deponents in terms of age and sex and written by a broader group of recorders (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 277, 278, 282). Again, there are interesting recorder and group patterns here, as illustrated in (11)–(14).

(11)
[Hand 1] The Deposistion of Steephen Bittford agged about 23 years who testifieth and saith that about the begining of April 1692 about midnight as I was abed att the house of James Darling of Salem I being **parfittly** awake I **saw** standing in the chamber Rebekah ["kah" written over "ce"] nurs and Elizabeth proctor [Hand 2] ∧{the wife of John prockter} [Hand 1] whom I **uery well knew** and I was in **uery grate paine** in my neck and **could not** stir my head nor spake a word but I **cannot** say that it was they that **hurt** me and for .2. or 3 dayes after I **could not** stir my neck but as I moued my whol body   (*RSWH*, no. 382)

(12)
[Hand 1] The testimoney of John derich {Agged bout 16 yeares} testifieth and saith that somtim in may last paste: Gorge ~~ga~~ Jacobs sin^r Cam to me and **bid** me goe to my wife and tell her that she muste send me some money: and he **bid** me that I should not Eate aney of his Cheires: and diuers times sence he hath bin<e> in prissone hee hath **afflictted** me **sereual. ways** by pinching and by sraching and bitting and **told** me that if ~~he~~ I would not sett mi hand to his boocke he would destroye me and lead me in to the water and would haue drownded me and natheinnil watter<e> tooke me out of the water. and ~~the~~ [Hand 2] ∧{y^e prisoner} [Hand 1] knockt me downe with his stafe: the 3 day of this instant Augst: and while I wase ~~I~~ writting mi testimoney he **told** me that he did not Care for that writting and **told** me that ~~th~~ He had bin<n> a wizard this fortie yeares   (*RSWH*, no. 482)

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7.   An interesting counterexample is found in *RSWH*, no. 283, for Shelden. Here Thomas Putnam records a more "traditional" Shelden deposition, which focuses on conversations with dead, alleged victims of witchcraft. It does not include any claims of personal affliction and hence no stance language in that regard. Perhaps tellingly, it was not used at trial.

(13)

[Hand 1] The deposistion of ffra{n}ces wycum who testifieth and saith that quickly affter the first court att Salme about wicthcraft margerit Scott whom I **very well knew**: or hir Apperance came to me and did most **greviously torment** ∧{me} by choaking and **almost** presing me to death: and so she did continu **affleting** me by times tell the 5ᵗʰ August 1692 being the day of hir Examination allso during the time of hir Examination margerit Scott did **most greviously affl<ec>t** me: and also seurall times sence: and I **beleue in my heart** that margerit Scott is a wicth and that she has **often affleted** me by acts of wicthcraft   (*RSWH*, no. 648)

(14)

[Hand 1] The Deposistion of Samuell wilknes agged about 19 years who testifi-eth and saith that sence Jno: willard has ben in prizzon I haue been **afflected in a strange kind of maner** for about the later end of June or begining of July as I was a weaveing the yarn broak **exceeding** fast: and as I was a tying a thread I had a stroak on my hand like a knife the blood being **almost** Redy to com out and I was also pinched seueral times by an unseen hand: also Riding to marblehead Just as I came to forrist Riuer Bridge I was Immediatly seazed with a **violent** wait [= weight] on my back and I **saw** a black hate [= hat]: and was Immediatly pulled ofe my horse or mare and **almost** pulled into the Riuere: but: holding fast at last I gott up againe: a while affter as I was once in the woods and a goeing hom ∧{&} a little boy with me: I **thought** I **must** run: and I said: to the boy let us Run: and as soon as I Ran there was a black hate Run along by me: a while affter one mornig about an hour by sun I was **afflected** and I **saw** John willard or his Apperance with a darke collored coot: and a black hate **very** like that hate which I for~~m~~morly **saw**: a llitle while affter this one night as soon as I was abed John willard whom I **very well knew** or his Appearanc came in to the Room where I was abed: and another man and woman along with him which I **did not know** and they **tould** me they woold cary me away before morning.   (*RSWH*, no. 490)

There is some variation in the stance characteristics of the "nightly visitation" type of affliction (some pointing to more personal affliction, others to more spoken in-teraction with specters), but example (11) gives a good general sense of this type. It is similar to other affliction narratives in that it appeals to visual evidence, but it contrasts with such narratives in that there is more focus on physical ailment (*pain*) and lack of ability (use of negation in combination with *can/could*). These patterns are more characteristic of the depositions discussed in 8.4, which focus on disease, unexplained events, and suspicious behavior, and they often overlap with these narratives in that both themes can be combined in the depositions.

Examples (12) and (13), on the other hand, bring in relief the differences be-tween depositions written by Putnam (13) and those written by other recorders (exemplified in 12). The features in Putnam's depositions are by now well-known, and (13) follows the same patterns. Example (12) does express personal affliction

(highlighted by *afflicted* and the "vague language" expression *several ways*), but the deposition mostly relies on reporting what the specter allegedly said (with Quotatives). In that respect, it is much closer to most of the depositions by the outer circle accusers Susannah Shelden and Elizabeth Booth. What is interesting, of course, is that Putnam writes a deposition for a non-inner circle core accuser more or less the same way as for the inner circle members (which we also saw with Booth and Shelden above). Indeed, Putnam writes consistently for Sarah Bibber, who was a fierce accuser (and the target of fierce pushback as well; see 8.5). Robinson (1991: 112) does not mention Bibber by name in his outline of the core accusers, but later notes that Bibber "hover[ed] at the edge of the afflicted group" (Robinson 1991: 146).[8] Nevertheless, Putnam (co-)records eight depositions for her, which, without fail, evidence the very same stance language as in the inner circle core depositions.

That does not mean, however, that this was an automatic writing style for Putnam writing for claimed victims of affliction (and he also wrote other types of depositions as we shall see in 8.3 and 8.4, whose characteristics are partly or wholly different). Example (14) illustrates a very different kind of record written by Putnam. We find some of the same afflictive language, though notably only AFFLICT (not TORMENT nor TORTURE), and *almost*, which is common in Putnam depositions, is here used in collocation with non-afflictive language, rather than in the recurring collocation *almost* CHOKE. Degree modifiers are not found primarily in connection with suffering or assault, but in more descriptive contexts (*exceeding fast*, *very like*).

Similar, but even more complex patterns emerge in other cases. For example, Putnam pens a lengthy deposition for his wife, Ann Putnam Sr. (*RSWH*, no. 30). While the deposition includes the normal Putnam phraseology (such as *most grievously torture*, *with such tortures as no tongue can express*), it is much more personalized, and the formulaic phrases are interspersed with religious ejaculations and appeals (such as "had I not been upheild by an Allmighty Arme" and "blasphemously denying the blessed God and the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to saue my soule"). By contrast, Ann Sr.'s deposition in *RSWH*, no. 267, also written by Thomas, is basically a Shelden/Booth-like report of conversations with specters and ghosts, with her own suffering backgrounded.

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8. The inner circle core accusers often mention each other in their depositions, stressing how they witnessed by sight the spectral affliction of each other, but they rarely mention Bibber. She is mentioned in *RSWH*, nos. 7 and 9, but separately from the inner circle core members. Not until much later, in the case against Mary Bradbury, is she referenced together with inner circle members by an inner circle accuser (*RSWH*, nos. 586–588).

So what do we make of all of these complex group and recorder patterns? There is clearly some validity to Robinson's (1991) division if we view it from the way that the depositions are styled stance-wise. Inner circle core depositions focus on personal affliction, emphasized by degree modifiers and certainty expressions. Outer circle depositions frequently focus on reporting conversations with ghosts and specters where the accusers' "mouth-piece" status is front and center (signaled by frequent Quotatives). Other categories show a variety of patterns, including personal affliction, reports, and physical ailments. But these categories very much break down when we see that Thomas Putnam wrote depositions in the same way for various accusers, who do not all belong to the same Robinson groupings. At the same time, he doesn't write all depositions in the same way for alleged affliction sufferers (as we saw for his wife Ann Putnam Sr., and Samuel Wilkins in example 14). Since many of the depositions are so similar in terms of how stance is expressed (which is a major part of Putnam's depositions), it is difficult to maintain that the accusers (core and otherwise) conspired to present their evidence and themselves in similar verbal shape. It is possible that the inner core accusers provided a model that proved successful and was hence followed by others. But if that is the case, why wouldn't all depositions look exactly the same? Should we assume then that various recorders reformulated the style inherited from the inner core accusers into their own, usually more muted framing? That seems unlikely. And if the inner core accusers wanted a completely unified front in terms of their language and stances, why would Abigail Williams not follow that mantra? Her depositions, written almost exclusively by Samuel Parris, resemble those of other core accusers, but the stance expressions are again less incessant and more varied.[9] The simplest solution is that, as Hiltunen and Peikola (2007: 60), quoted above, suggest, Putnam was an "active shaping force behind [the] depositions."

If we accept Putnam as a shaping force, what are the implications for understanding the stance patterns? It is not completely clear whether his motives were sinister or whether he was indeed working within an established tradition of reformulation (as I suggested above). Perhaps these accusers expressed very similar experiences and sentiments that Putnam transformed into what he saw as an appropriate legal voice; in this scenario, the substance did not really matter, but expressing their alleged suffering appropriately did. In other words, the streamlining was already there, but he put his verbal, especially stance, stamp on them. Regardless of his motives, by doing so, he clearly gave voice to and framed the suffering of particular accusers in an especially poignant way: theirs was the suffering,

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9.   It is notable that none of Williams's depositions were used at trial (as they all lack the *jurat in curia* annotation), and only three (*RSWH*, nos. 183, 244, 245) were used at the Grand Jury hearing. Putnam's depositions had a much better success rate in this regard (cf. Ray 2015: 100).

theirs was the case, and theirs was the role that really mattered for the CoP. Like the physical behavior of the accusers during hearings and in other contexts, their written depositions "scream" to draw attention to their accounts and victim status, by frequent repetition of "afflictive" language, multal degree modifiers, and insistence on certainty and conviction. In other words, he assisted the accusers in projecting a stance of central importance to the workings of the Salem CoP. They possessed and even embodied the necessary evidence for convicting witches, and as such were part of the core membership of the CoP, who determined the actions and procedures of the CoP. I return to Putnam's role in Chapter 9 to discuss how to understand this kind of recorder pattern in the broader context of studying stance and historical language more generally, but as we shall see in the next Section (8.3), Putnam (as well as Parris, and possibly others) appears to have worked to further support this kind of positioning and the stance language used by the inner circle core accusers (and some others).

8.3   Depositions endorsing the accusers

Some fifty depositions report on what may be described as vicarious experience, especially vicarious affliction. These depositions focus on the deponents' experiences with primarily one or several of the inner core accusers, and more rarely one or more of the outer group or the aspirational accusers. In other words, these depositions do not as a rule present new evidence; rather, they simply underwrite the evidence already presented by other accusers. The purpose of such depositions is clearly to support the accusers, possibly because, at least initially, the accusations by women, and especially young women, were seen as potentially weak (see 2.2). Revealingly, the deponents of these testimonies include a small number of prominent Salemites who have significant roles in the trial proceedings in general: Thomas Putnam, Samuel Parris, Nathaniel Ingersoll, Edward Putnam, George Herrick, John Putnam Jr., Ezekiel Cheever, and a few others who make more infrequent appearances in the records (cf. Hoffer 1996: 102–103).[10] These deponents often file joint depositions with a combination of two-to-three people, most notably the first three. While these depositions are usually filed as separate physical documents, they also appear simply appended at the end of accuser depositions (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 124, 125, 157, 197).

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10. Robinson (1991: 121–123), who sees the Salem trials as fueled by a conspiracy, places several of these men at the center of the conspiracy, especially the Putnams, Parris, and Ingersoll, but also some of the others.

What is important for our purposes in these depositions is of course not exactly what they say in endorsing the accuser accounts, but how they say it and the stances taken and signaled. Indeed, the stance patterns are striking in many ways. And so is the identity of the recorders: of the fifty or so endorsing depositions, Thomas Putnam writes 19, Samuel Parris 13, Edward Putnam 3, and George Herrick 3; the others are written by a number of other recorders, who mostly write one and not more than two depositions. In other words, the two main recorders of inner core accuser depositions – Thomas Putnam and Samuel Parris – write the majority of the endorsing depositions. That is significant for understanding their stance patterns.

Three general, overlapping types of stance patterns can be identified in these depositions, very much mediated by who the recorder is: (1) some depositions focus on reporting what an accuser said, often mediated by evidentials that mark hearing (e.g., *heard say*); (2) depositions written by Samuel Parris usually provide "factual" statements of the alleged torments of the accusers, often emphasized by multal degree modifiers, with some quotative evidentials, but visual evidentials are rare; (3) depositions by Thomas Putnam (and to some extent Edward Putnam), which (not surprisingly) reveal a great deal of consistency across depositions, very much echo and underscore stance strategies and stance items in the core accuser depositions, including multiple multal degree modifiers, visual evidentials, and verbs of affliction.

With the exception of the depositions written by Thomas Putnam and Samuel Parris, it is most common for these depositions to simply report what an accuser said, but frequently with evidentials marking the sensory mediation of the report. In (15), David Furneaux and Jonathan Walcott Jr. – the latter may have written the deposition – insist on reporting Mary Walcott's pronouncements as *heard* three times, not as simply *said*.

> (15)
> [Hand 1] The Deposetion of Dauid Furneax Aged 23 or their abouts and Jonathan Walcott Junior aged 21: who testifieth and saith y^t on the 20th of may 1692 about 12 of the clock **we hearde** mary Walcott in one of her fitts **say** that she saw the apparition of Sarah Procttor come and hurte her by choak{ing} and pinching of her **we both also heard** her **say** that she brought the book to her and urged her to write in her book **we ware then both presante and heard** her **say** I would not write in your book though you kill me   (*RSWH*, no. 210)

What is recorded in (15) is of course straightforward hearsay, which, as we have seen, was not uncommon during the Salem trial proceedings and probably not unusual in general at the time (7.3.5). The report does not provide much additional evidentiary value; Mary Walcott's deposition in *RSWH*, no. 213, presents almost verbatim what Furneaux and Walcott Jr. depose that she said. What it does do is to

suggest that Walcott did not simply make it up at some point but that this indeed happened to Walcott at one point in time. (Of course, what remains unexamined in the deposition is whether she made it up when she alleged the affliction.) The addition of sensory evidentials of hearing is no doubt an attempt to strengthen the support as much as possible. Whether consciously or not, by stressing the hearing, the deponents conform to the "ear-witness" standards of Puritan jurisprudence that Kamensky (1997) indicates: they were indeed present, heard what was said, and can repeat it accurately (see 7.3.2.2 and 8.5). As in this type of deposition in general, Furneaux and Walcott Jr. themselves do not provide overt evaluation or conclusions about what the speech entails; Mary Walcott's accusations are left to speak for themselves. This is similar to what we find in some depositions that depict mysterious events, disease, and suspicious behavior (see in 8.4).

The depositions written by Samuel Parris go one step further in positioning the accusers, their alleged sufferings, and most importantly the stance language the accusers use. Example (16) is representative of Parris's depositions, written on behalf of Parris, Nathaniel Ingersoll, and Thomas Putnam, the three most common deponents of Parris's endorsing depositions.

> (16)
> [Hand 1] The Deposition of Sam: Parris aged about .39. years, & Nathanael Ingersoll aged about fifty & eight yeares & also Thomas Putman aged about fourty yeares all of Salem testifyeth & saith that divers of the afflicted by Witchcraft were **much tortured** at the Examination of John Proctor of Salem Farmer before the honoured Magistrates the .11th April .1692. & particularly when Mr Joseph Popes wife was **severall times afflicted**, Ann Putman jun^e & Abigail Williams **testifyed** that it was by John Proctor aforesaid & his wife Elizabeth, & also when Mercy Lewes was **much afflicted** at the same examination said Ann **witnessed** that it was by said Proctor & his ∧{wife} & Goody Cloyse, also ~~Also~~ when Goody Bibber was **much afflicted**, Abig: Williams just before **cryed out** there is Goodman Proctor going to hurt Goody Bibber, & also said Abigail **cryed out** there is Goodman Proctor going to hurt Mary Walcot, & imediately Mary Walcot was seized with a **violent** fit
> (*RSWH*, no. 57)

Like Parris's depositions in general, (16) also reports what the accused said (*testified*, *witnessed*, *cried out*), but does not stress the record as heard. As in Furneaux's and Walcott Jr.'s deposition in (15), this part simply underwrites what is evident from other depositions (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 53), though stressing that the information comes directly from the mouths of the accused. However, Parris's deposition goes beyond this repeated verbal record to state unequivocally that the afflicted were *tortured* and *afflicted*, emphasizing their tortures by the multal degree modifier *much* (or vague statements of frequency) in each case of the verb. These patterns are significant on two levels. Most straightforwardly, these stance strategies evaluate

and underscore the accusers' alleged sufferings, hence underwriting their accounts. They thus also of course align the deponents strongly with the accusers and the goals of the CoP. However, on a more linguistic level, by using very similar stance strategies down to the very same lexical items, Parris's depositions also endorse the language of the accusers. The language that the accusers have (allegedly) chosen to use to describe their afflictions is here echoed and, as such, given further legitimacy in the mouths of some of the most prominent members of the Salem Village community. There is of course a vicious circle of sorts in this recycling of words, which I return to below.

These strategies are even more striking in Thomas Putnam's depositions, illustrated by (17). As in this example, Putnam usually writes for himself and his brother Edward, or John Putnam Jr. When Thomas joins Parris to depose in support of the accusers, Parris always writes the deposition (as illustrated in 16).

> (17)
> [Hand 1] The deposistion of Tho: putnam aged 40: years and Edward putnam agged 38 years who testifieth and saith. that we haueing ben conversan<t> with seuerall of the affected parsons ~~we~~ as mary walcott mercy lewes Eliz: Hubburt and **we haue se<e>n** them **most dreadfully tomented** and **we haue seen dreadfull** marks in their fleesh which **they said** mr. Burrough<s> did make by hurting them: but on 9ᵗʰ may 1692: the day of the Examin[Lost] [= examination] of mr. George Burroughs the afforesaid parsons ware **most dreadfully tormented** ~~and~~ dureing the time of his ["s" written over "r"] Examination **as if they would haue been torne al to peaces** ~~and~~ ∧{or} **all their bones putt out of joyn<t> and with such tortors as no tounge can express** also **seuerall times** senc<e> ~~seen~~ **we haue seen** the afforesaid affected parsons **most dreadfully tormented** and **grevi<o>usly complainig** of mr. Burroughs for hurting th<em> and **we beleue** that mr. George Burroughs the prizsoner att the ba<r> has **severall times affected and tormented** the afforesaid persons by acts of wicthcraft   (*RSWH*, no. 127)

As shown in (17), Putnam's depositions share characteristics with Parris's depositions on a general level: they stress the accusers' alleged tortures and report what the accusers themselves said. At the same time, we see the narrative "upped" in intensity in some ways and even more closely aligned with the accusers' stances and the accusers' stance language. One of the most notable aspects is that, where Parris's depositions simply presented as fact the afflictions and tortures of the accusers, Putnam's depositions almost without fail establish a visual mediation (after highlighting the deponents' contact with the afflicted in *we having been conversant*). This is significant in two ways. It stresses the first-hand experience (and perhaps immediacy) of the deponents' experience. In some ways, it is similar to the mediation of hearing that we saw in the first type of endorsing depositions above. It

may have been enough simply to state that afflictions took place to signal that the deponents' experience was first-hand (as in Parris's depositions), but Putnam's depositions hammer home that experience by insisting throughout that it was direct visual experience. The claims of reliability and certainty that this overt flagging of first-hand experience entails were discussed and argued extensively in in 7.3.2.2. But what is also important here is that the repetition of visual evidentials echoes the insistent use of *see*, *saw*, and *seen* in the accuser accounts. In other words, using SEE in all its forms can be viewed not only as an endorsement of the experiences of the accusers but an endorsement of the linguistic stance means that the accusers used to highlight and claim the importance of their experience.

While Parris's depositions use multal degree modifiers (there *much*), Putnam's depositions are much closer to and mimic what we find in most core accuser accounts, the by now well-known *most dreadful/dreadfully* and *most grievous/grievously*, as well as other less common degree modifiers in core accuser depositions such as *with such tortures as no tongue can express*. We even find the *believe*-formula (7.3.4, 8.2) in many of these depositions, again echoing what we find mainly in the inner core accuser language.

The patterns here should not surprise us, but they are nonetheless revealing: Parris writes his endorsing depositions similarly to how he writes his depositions for his niece Abigail Williams, one of the inner core accusers, and the same is true for Thomas Putnam, writing for Elizabeth Hubbard, Mercy Lewis, Mary Walcott, and his own daughter, Ann Jr. As the stance strategies that are found in accuser depositions penned by these two recorders differ slightly, so do the strategies in the endorsing records produced by them. Irrespective of the differences, what is striking is that the language they use in the endorsing depositions underwrites the language used in the core accuser depositions (and those of some other accusers), a language that they were wholly or in part responsible for creating or at least for disseminating. By adopting certain stances and using certain stance strategies they align with and support the accusers and of course support their own role and that of the accusers in the Salem CoP. A particular stance language appears to be established as central for claiming a core contributor role in the Salem CoP. In other words, they are responsible for setting the standards for a particular discourse within the CoP's repertoire.

8.4   Depositions of mysterious events, disease, death, and suspicious behavior

Almost as common as the affliction depositions are depositions that deal with a range of suspicious and inexplicable events, actions, and behaviors that were clearly seen as providing incriminating evidence against an accused. While these ca. 150 depositions may at first seem like a motley group, they coalesce around a few narrative themes, which partly overlap with the stance themes identified in Chapter 5. We find narratives of mysterious events, such as appearances of strange and often murderous animals (e.g., *RSWH*, no. 40, 160, 268, 599), or unexplained phenomena such as lights or circles of fire (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 123, 685). Some narratives allege suspicious behavior on the part of an accused, which can involve anything from perceived inappropriate use of language (swearing, lying, threats, scolding, etc.) (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 37, 38, 142) and angry outbursts (e.g., *RSWH*, no. 208), to fortune-telling (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 556, 633), superhuman strength (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 130, 634), and a number of other events or actions that were clearly seen as out of the ordinary (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 356, 573). A particularly prominent theme revolves around disease, death, and deranged behavior by farm animals, relatives, and neighbors, which are ascribed to witchcraft (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 24, 257, 321, 336, 463, 686). It is important to recognize these as narrative *themes* rather than as deposition types per se. While some depositions are mainly concerned with one or the other theme, many combine them to create complex narratives with multiple layers of accusation. For example, many depositions record an initial run-in with a person who exhibits behaviors that are associated with witches; this event is then connected with subsequent unexplained phenomena and physical ailments (see, e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 411, 448, 466, 488). A hallmark of these depositions is that this connection between the initial disagreement or falling out and the purported perpetration of witchcraft is often left implicit or as an "equation." Ray (2015: 50) notes that in previous New England witch trials, this type of evidence, which was "observable" (known as "maleficium"), was the more common fare for the courts (see also Godbeer 2018: 14–15, 25–26).[11]

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11.   In general, the status of this evidence in the trials is peculiar, as pointed out even by contemporaneous commentators. Calef (1700: 140) critically noted that the indictments were drawn up for afflicting a particular person (usually one of the inner core group), but the evidence about disease, strange events, etc. had no bearing on personal affliction. Yet, such depositions were often admitted into evidence and used at trial, as shown by the *jurat in curia* annotation and by the description in Cotton Mather (1693). Godbeer (1992: e.g., 18, 205) argues that this kind of evidence, while favored by community members, was not congruent with theological and legal definitions of witchcraft in New England, which emphasized a diabolical connection that was often missing in these narratives. In Godbeer's (1992) view, this evidence was disfavored in New

In addition to encompassing a number of narrative themes, this group of depositions is also complex in that the depositions were written by a large number of recorders, with few repeating recorders, and most deponents file only one deposition. This situation is strikingly different from what we saw in terms of affliction depositions and depositions supporting those who claim affliction, where a small group of recorders dominates the picture and writes for mainly a small group of repeat accusers. In the present group, we find a number of self-authored depositions (see 2.4, for this concept), and there are likely many more among the unidentified recorders (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 189, 410, 557, which were all written by John Hale, giving his own testimony; no. 130, written by Simon Willard, telling his own evidence about George Burroughs). The majority of the depositions, however, was recorded by others on behalf of the deponent. While we do find some of the more frequent recorders here as well (including Thomas Putnam), most were likely written as one-off favors by family friends or people with known writing ability in the community (see 2.3).

With such a varied set of narrative themes and recorders, it is not surprising to see variation in stance strategies. This is the category where looking at individual stance moves and their motivation in relation to individual legal cases would be particularly productive, along the lines suggested in 8.1. I concentrate on broader, cross-deposition stancetaking strategies in this section and leave for the future investigation how individual depositions leveraged stance resources and positioned the deponents against a particular accused and within the CoP. Overall, as we saw in Chapter 5, stance is especially expressed in the contexts of describing and evaluating disease, death, strangeness, and fright, often with the means of adjectival description, and frequently (especially in terms of fright) with multal degree modifiers. We also find adjectival evaluation in connection with some of the accuseds' demeanor or character. The alleged witches' verbal behavior is often evaluated with the help of evaluative speech reporting verbs that draw conclusions about the type of speech act that the accused has performed (e.g., *scold*, *threaten*, etc.). Negation also emerges as a prominent stance theme in these depositions, often expressing lack of ability and power and contrasting with some perceived normal state of affairs. In terms of evidentiality, the depositions show the full gamut of strategies discussed in Chapter 7, but compared to other depositions, there is less expression of direct visual experience, which is instead mostly left implied, but there is considerably more mediation by Assumption and Inference markers (such as THINK, KNOW, SEEM, *to my remembrance*, etc.; 7.3.4) than in other deposition types, especially the affliction

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England witch trials. While Godbeer (1992) includes the Salem trials here too, the situation seems to have been more complicated since many of these non-diabolical narratives were accepted as evidence, sworn to, and used at trial, as Calef's (1700) comments indicate.

depositions by the core and associated accusers. These Assumption and Inference markers often seem to signal some level of uncertainty, but may also emphasize the surreal or supernatural nature of the event and the deponents' difficulty in accounting for it.

By way of an initial illustration, example (18) gives a straightforward picture of these overall strategies (see also Grund 2020a: 84–85).

> (18)
> [Hand 1] Samuel Abbey of Salem Villiage Aged 45. Years or thereabouts and Mary Abbey his wife aged 38 years or thereabout: Deposeth and saith:
> That about this Time Three Years past Wm Good and his wife Sarah Good be-ing Destitute of an howse to dwell in these Deponents out of Charity, they being Poor. lett them live in theirs some time, vntill that the said Sarah Good was ~~of~~ **so Turbulant a Spirritt, Spitefull, and so Mallitiously bent**, that these Deponent<s> **could not Suffer** ∧{her} to Live in their howse any Longer; and was forced for Quiettness sake to turne she ye said Sarah, with her husband, out of theire howse, ever since, which is about two Years 1/2 agone; the said Sarah Good, ~~hath~~ {~~not~~} [1–2 words overstruck] ~~to the s^d deponents hat~~<?> hath carried it **very Spitefully & Mallitiously**, toward them, the winter following after the said Sarah was gone from our howse, we began to Loose Cattle, and Lost severell **after an vnusall Manner: in a drupeing Condition** and yett they would Eate: and your Deponents have Lost after that manner 17 head of Cattle within this two years, besides Sheep, and Hoggs: and **both doe beleive they Dyed by witchcraft**, the said William Good ["William Good" written over "Samuel Abbey"] on ["on" written over "in"] the last ∧{of} may, was twelve months, went home to his wife the s^d Sarah Good, and told her, what a sad Accident had fallen out, she asked what:, he answered that his neighbour Abbey had lost two Cowes, both dyeing within halfe an hower of one another, the s^d Sarah good said she did not care if he the said Abbey had Lost all the Cattle he had, {**as ye said Jn^o Good told vs**} Just that very Day, that the said Sarah good was taken up, we yo^ε Deponents had a Cow that **could not rise alone**, but since presently after she was taken up, the said Cow was **well** and **could rise so well, as if she had ailed nothing**: she the said Sarah good: ever since these Dponants turned ∧{her} out of their howse she hath ~~carried~~ behaveed her selfe **very crossely & Mallitiously**, to them & their Children **calling** their Chillren **Vile Names** and hath **threetened** them often./.   (*RSWH*, no. 352)

As in some of these depositions in general, in (18), there is an initial negative evalu-ation of the accused, Sarah Good. In this deposition, this evaluation is accomplished through adjective phrases (*turbulent*, *spiteful*, *malicious*), and the account goes on to allege further behavior along the same lines using adverb phrases to characterize the verbal actions (*very spitefully*, *very crossly*, *maliciously*). The degree of reprehen-sible behavior is stressed by the use of the multals *so* and *very*. Good's words are also clearly supposed to signal an uncharitable mindset, as she reportedly shows

no concern for the Abbeys' loss of cattle. That this report comes from Good's own husband is no doubt supposed to be significant: who would know her better and have more close contact with Good? The deposition also attributes to Good another feature viewed as characteristic of witches: abusive language. A common stance thread in these depositions in general, Good's speech is evaluated as threatening (indicated by the speech act verb), and she is further intimated to have used *vile names* to their children. Though some depositions purport to give the actual words used by the deponent, the Abbeys simply give their interpretation of what the language use implied (see 5.2.3). The events that are conjoined with this evaluation of Good are clearly seen as out of the ordinary (*after an unusual manner*, *could not rise*). And they conclude witchcraft using a formulation that approaches a *believe*-formula. At the same time, it is notable that the whole deposition functions as an equation rather than as a straightforward accusation. At no point do the Abbeys level a straightforward accusation; instead, they rely on the reader (i.e., the authorities) to make the appropriate conclusion. They appear to assume that readers will clearly see the mysterious events (death of cattle) as a result of and as integrally associated with Good's fraught past dealings with the Abbeys and her physical and verbal behavior that has all the hallmarks of a witch. In other words, if they put two and two together, how could the authorities not draw the conclusion that Good must be a witch and that she must have practiced witchcraft to kill the cattle? "Witchcraft tied up loose ends, accounting for the arbitrary, the eerie, and the unneighborly," as Schiff (2015: 106, also 148) has suggested (cf. Godbeer 2018: 25–26).[12]

This may of course seem like flimsy and wholly unconvincing evidence to us, and we may expect depositions not to level accusations but to stay focused on the facts. However, the standards were clearly different in seventeenth-century New England, and for New Englanders, whose worldview included as a natural component the existence of witches and the Devil's machinations, this kind of equation clearly made a great deal of sense (see 1.3). It is thus no great surprise that the Abbeys' deposition was accepted into evidence at trial, as shown by the appended "Jurat in Curia," which meant that it was seen as providing relevant and incriminating evidence.

The Abbeys' deposition is a particularly clear case of the stance strategies that as a whole characterize this group. In other depositions, we may find an emphasis on certain strategies in favor of others. These deposition preferences are illustrated in (19) (and 20 further below).

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12. Petykó (2017: 227–230) shows similar equation-like testimony in eighteenth-century witch trials in Hungary. He suggests that implicit assumptions tied to the trial procedure were behind the officials accepting the testimony as relevant and true, even if an accusation is not clearly articulated. Since the Salem depositions appear to have been produced under different circumstances, it is not clear how parallel the cases are in terms of the dynamics. But the overlaps are notable.

(19)

[Hand 1] The deposistion of Samuell Smith of Boxford aged about 25 yeas who testifieth and saith that about fiue {years} sence I was one night att the house of Isaac Estick senr of Topsfeild and I was **as farr as I know to Rude in discorse** and the aboue said Esticks wife **tould {said to}** me I had {would} not best {haue you} be so rude in discorse for I might Rue it hereafter and as I was agoeing whom that night about a quarter of a mille from the said Esticks house by a stone wall I Receiued a **little** blow on my shoulder. **with I know not what** and the stone wall rattleed **uery much** which **affrighted** me my horse also was **affrighted uery much** but **I cannot giue the reson of it**   (*RSWH*, no. 88)

In (19), there is a focus on fright and to some extent the unexplained. Unlike the Abbeys' deposition, Smith's deposition does not provide an evaluation of the speech attributed to the accused, Mary Easty, but the interpretation of Easty's language as a threat was presumably not lost on readers. Indeed, Smith seems to rely on the authorities reading the language as such in order to establish that his narrative has some relevance for the case against Easty; it is after all what provides a connection – tenuous as it may seem – between the subsequent mysterious events and Easty. Front and center is his own emotional response – and that of his horse – showing the fright (*affrighted* x2) that he – and the horse – felt (emphasized by the repeated degree modifier *very much*). By making this the central point, the deposition makes clear Smith's victim status and his helplessness.

Most importantly, Smith suggests that supernatural forces were behind what happened. While many depositions of this kind evaluate the happenings explicitly as *strange* or *not usual* (5.3.2), Smith's deposition takes another tack. He notes his inability (*cannot*) to find any other reason for it, and he cannot explain ("I know not") what hit him when he was struck. Although we did not see much of it in the Abbeys' deposition, expression of inability and lack of power or strength (as in Smith's deposition) occurs with some frequency in depositions of this type, especially signaled by *could not* and *cannot* (e.g., *could not speak* in *RSWH*, nos. 149, 494; *could not stir/move* in *RSWH*, nos. 411, 598; *cannot/could not see/perceive/tell* in *RSWH*, nos. 463, 466, 488, 687). The deponents struggle to interpret what they see, and they hence imply the strangeness or extraordinary nature of the events, but they also signal their powerlessness in the face of perceived supernatural powers. It is overall notable that, although modal verbs are often discussed within the context of stance (e.g., Biber and Finegan 1989; Biber et al. 1999: 970; Kaltenböck et al. 2020: 3, 7), they are rare compared to other stance means in the Salem depositions, and mostly found in represented speech rather than in the deponents' framing of their own experiences. *Can* and *could* stand out in this regard as they are frequently found in the deponents' own stancetaking, and they are usually found in contexts of negation. As Thompson and Hunston (2000: 21) note, "[e]valuation involves

comparison of the object of evaluation against a yardstick of some kind," and negation implies such a "yardstick" (see also Labov 1972: 380–387). The assumed "normal" state of affairs is clearly ability, but here it is negated, suggesting that these are not normal circumstances that they are able to handle.

In (20), we find overlapping but also slightly different stance patterns.

> (20)
> [Hand 1] the deposition of Joseph Bayley aged forty four years testifyeth and saith, that I on the: 25ᵗʰ day of may last my self & my wife being bound to Boston, on the road when I came in sight of the house where John procter did liue, there was a uery hard blow strook on my brest which caused great pain in my stumoc & amasement in my head but did see no person near me only my wife behind me on the same hors, and when I came agains sd procters house according to my understanding I did se John procter & his wife att sd house procter himself loocked out of the windo & his wife did stand Just without the dore, I tould my wife of it, {&} shee did loock that way & could see nothing but a littell maid att the dore. I saw no maide there but procters wife according to my understanding did stand att the dore, afterwards about half a mile from the afore sd house I was taken spechles for sum short time. my wife did ask me seuarall questions and desiered me that if I could not speak I should hould up my hand which I did. and immediatly I could speak as well as euer, and when we came to the way where Salem Road cometh into Ipswich road there I receiued another blow on my brest which caused much pain that I could not sitt on my hors and when I did alite off my hors, to my understanding I saw a woman coming towards us about sixteen or twenty pole from us but did not know who it was, my wife could not see her when I did get up on my hors againe to my understanding there stood a cow where I saw the woman, after that we went to Boston without any farther molestation but after I came home againe to newbury I was pinched and nipt by sumthing inuisible for sum=time but now through gods goodnes to me I am well again   (RSWH, no. 494)

As in both the depositions by Smith and by the Abbeys, a similar equation-like narrative emerges in Joseph Bailey's deposition: when he approaches the Procters' house, he is assaulted by an unknown force, and as he rides past the house, he thinks he sees Elizabeth Procter, but this is reportedly disputed by his wife, who sees a young girl. There are further unexplained events, such as Bailey being unable to speak and being again physically assaulted by some unknown force. But he recovers and again has an ambiguous visual experience, only to be re-assaulted and then recover. To us, there is little "smoking-gun" evidence here. Indeed, the Procters really do not do anything at all that can be interpreted as menacing or triggering a suspicion of witchcraft, unlike in (18) and (19); there is no negative evaluation through adjective or adverb phrases, and no evaluation of speech acts. Instead, the narrative centers on Bailey's ailments and struggles, and his negotiation of his own

visual experiences. As in Smith's and the Abbeys' depositions (and most depositions in this group), the authorities are asked to draw their own conclusions, and as in the case of the Abbeys' testimony, they found the account convincing enough to admit it into evidence (as shown by the "Jurat in Curia" appended).

As in narratives that emphasize ailment (5.3.2), we find evaluation in the context of physical assault, both in terms of the intensity (*great pain*, *much pain*, *very hard blow*) and the health state (*well*), and we see the lack of ability (as well as recovery) noted above in connection with Smith's deposition. What is particularly striking about Bailey's deposition is his evidential positioning or negotiation. This group of depositions as a rule provides much less explicit appeal to information based on direct visual input compared to core accuser affliction narratives. Bailey's account to some extent stands out, therefore, but it falls in line with other depositions of this category in that the visual appeal is mediated. In each of the three cases when Bailey records his information as seen, he adds a cognitive "filter" by supplying (*according*) *to my understanding*, an Assumption evidential marker. In other words, he is not entirely clear on what he is seeing, and his wife is reported not to be able to see what he alleges or to have a different visual experience. This positioning would seem to add some uncertainty about how to understand Bailey's narrative in general, and Bailey (and/or the recorder of his testimony) may have intended the Assumption markers as hedging his claims. However, it is also possible to read the narrative as reinforcing the eeriness and supernatural nature of the narrative. Not only could he not tell what assaulted him, he also could not tell exactly what he saw; he was not able to trust his own senses to determine the nature of his experience with certainty. We see further emphasis of that theme in his point that the undefined "sumthing inuisible" (which can be characterized as "vague language"; see 8.2) pinched and nipped him.

This layered interpretation of Assumption and Inference evidentials is possible throughout depositions of this kind. When these depositions filter the experience by citing the deponents' inference, thought, opinion, belief, assumption, knowledge, and understanding, they may – whether intended or not – in many instances further underwrite the case against an accused rather than introduce uncertainty or doubt about the account provided. The events are so unnatural, strange, or frightening as to make the deponents' perception or interpretation of them unclear, uncertain, and undefined. Framing them as such does not negate the existence or importance of the events; it highlights them.

This is not the only interpretation of Assumption and Inference markers of course, and the type of marker used has an impact on interpretation. For example, an appeal to remembrance is less likely to fit into the layered negotiation indicated above (see, e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 336, 575), and presumably mostly had a hedging effect. Other markers, by contrast, clearly had a boosting effect, especially appeals to belief

and thought at the end of a deposition working as a summation and conclusion about the experiences of a deponent (e.g., *RSWH*, nos. 336, 393, 448; see 7.3.4). Whatever the exact function of the Assumption and Inference markers, the most important point is that they do occur in these depositions much more so than in other deposition groups.

Indeed, the relationship of this group of depositions to the affliction depositions discussed in 8.2 is particularly striking. Overall, the two groups are clearly related in that they both provide purportedly incriminating evidence, and the present group shows some overlap in particular with the infrequent affliction narratives that depict nightly visitations. At the same time, the stance strategies employed in these two general groups of depositions differ markedly. The core accuser depositions insist on direct visual experience (marked especially by SEE), even when testifying to affliction by specters and other happenings that are clearly beyond the ordinary. Hardly ever is there any mediation of the sight nor any Assumption or Inference markers, which could be interpreted as introducing some doubt or uncertainty. If these markers are used, they are almost without fail in the service of stressing certainty and conviction (such as the *believe*-formula). The depositions discussed in this section, on the other hand, make frequent use of cognitive mediation. Even if markers of Assumption and Inference at times appear to have boosting effects, in many cases the function seems to be the opposite: to attenuate the claim and, whether consciously or unconsciously, to highlight the strangeness of the situation, behavior, or actions. While stance markers signaling strangeness, lack of understanding and ability, and the fright felt by the deponents recur in these depositions, they are almost completely absent from the core and related accuser accounts. Despite their claimed constant interaction with tormenting specters and various other frightening apparitions, the core and associated accusers virtually never express fear, inability to respond and understand; nor do they indicate the unusual nature of the events. Instead, they express no doubts about who the abusers are and what they are trying to accomplish. While the stance strategies of the two groups are to some extent connected to the type of evidence presented (personal affliction vs. inexplicable events, diseases, and suspicious behaviors), this difference does not clearly and fully account for the contrasting stance usage. Instead, we arguably see different positioning strategies within the Salem CoP. Both groups no doubt aimed to contribute to and be members cooperating with the CoP, but their membership claims are arguably different. While the depositions in this section certainly claim active member participation for their deponents, the linguistic positioning does not suggest that they wish to progress beyond that role. By contrast, the core accusers depositions (whether the language was created by the accusers themselves and/or by the recorders of their depositions), as well as the depositions filed by their supporters, attempt to position the accusers in a different, more central category:

the core, which would have more power and influence in framing and governing the workings (the enterprise as well as repertoire) of the CoP. This group claims more certainty, a more intense personal victimization, and privileged knowledge that the CoP cannot do without if it is to carry out its joint enterprise of bringing witches to justice.

8.5   Depositions endorsing the accused

Depositions that endorse an accused (ca. 40) reveal stance patterns that set them apart from other types of depositions. Some of these depositions' stance moves are unattested or rarely attested in the other deposition types, while other stance moves are found elsewhere but employed for seemingly different purposes. Indeed, not surprisingly, the usage may respond to stancetaking in other depositions, especially those focusing on affliction. Within this category of depositions, two distinct types emerge:[13] one type focuses on extolling the virtues of an accused and negating charges of witchcraft, while the other type tries to endorse an accused by throwing doubt on the credibility of an accuser or a particular charge.[14] The two types show overlaps in strategies, but in complex ways. The first type is characterized by frequent reliance on positive adjectival evaluation pertaining to the character of the accused, an emphasis on direct visual experience, and "negated evidentials." The second type, on the other hand, also frequently relies on adjectival description, but provides a negative portrayal of an accuser, and on reporting what others, usually the accused, have said, often mediated by sensory evidentials of hearing.

A straightforward example of the first type of deposition is found in Thomas Bradbury's deposition (written by Thomas himself) regarding his wife, Mary Bradbury, given in (21).

> (21)
> Concerning my beloued wife Mary Bradbury this is that I haue to say: wee haue been maried fifty fiue yeare: and shee hath bin a loueing & faithfull wife to mee, vnto this day shee hath been wonderfull: laborious dilligent & industryous in her place & imployment, about the bringing vp oᵉ family (wᶜʰ haue bin eleven childeren

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13. Ephraim Wilds's deposition (*RSWH*, no. 412) combines the two approaches, but there are no other clear cases of combination.

14. It is not always clear who is endorsed in a given deposition concentrating on undermining an accuser. Only sometimes is the accused mentioned explicitly in the deposition, although the name may be noted in the docket annotation (that is, the note about the case written on the back of the deposition as it was folded up and stored), as in *RSWH*, no. 413.

> of o$^{\varepsilon}$ owne & fower grand=children: shee was both prudent, & provident: of a
> cheerfull Spiritt liberall & charitable: Shee being now very aged & weake, & greiued
> vnder her affliction may not bee able to s∧{p}eake much for her selfe, not being so
> free of Speach as some others may bee: I hope her life and conversation hath been
> such amongst her neighbours, as giues a better & mo∧{re} reall Testimoney of her,
> then can bee exprest by words   (*RSWH*, no. 439)

We find here the characteristic use of adjectival evaluation. Indeed, Bradbury's
deposition shows a stacking of adjectives: *beloved*, *loving*, *faithful*, *wonderful*, *la-
borious*, *diligent*, *industrious*, *prudent*, *provident*, *cheerful*, *liberal*, and *charitable*.
Not surprisingly, these adjectives are positive in nature, underscoring a number
of virtues that would have been seen as consonant with Puritan values, including
faithfulness, industry, prudence, and charity. In other words, this is a testimony of
character. As shown by contemporaneous legal manuals from England, such en-
dorsements of good life and behavior could be influential with juries (Hoffer 1996:
167). More personally and communally, it is of course abundantly clear that Thomas
aligns with his wife. At the same time, evaluations of this kind are undoubtedly also
intended to stand in contrast to the charges leveled against the accused. As in most
endorsing depositions, those charges are not mentioned explicitly in Bradbury's
deposition, but the goal appears to be to push back against the charges implicitly:
how can a person with such an impeccable life commit the kinds of atrocities laid at
her door? This implicit counternarrative also implies a disaligning with the accusers
and indeed the Salem CoP, at least in this particular case, or it shows a concern with
renegotiating what the joint enterprise of the CoP should be.

It is probably little surprise that such disalignment characterizes this type of
deposition, and that it is frequently highlighted by other stance moves. In this
deposition, Mary is said to be *grieved under her affliction* and hence *not able to
speak much for herself* and *not so free of speech as others*. Again, there appears to be a
contrasting narrative here. The choice of *affliction* is unlikely to be coincidental. As
we saw in 5.3.1, AFFLICT is the term *par excellence* to describe and evaluate alleged
attacks by witches. Here, by contrast, it is used in the physical sense of 'ill health'
(*OED*, s.v. *affliction*), as described by the preceding *very aged* and *weak*. Because of
this state of ill health, she is unable to defend herself appropriately in speech. This is
in contradistinction to the accusers, who claim severe affliction but are nonetheless
very liberal in their language. Indeed, their power lies primarily in their language,
not least in their depositions, which includes all kinds of textual and linguistic
histrionics. This is hammered home in the final sentence where Thomas suggests
that Mary's life and behavior "giues a better & mo∧{re} reall Testimoney of her, then
can bee exprest by words." The accusers, on the other hand, who rely primarily or
wholly on spectral evidence that only they can see, have to be taken at their word.

Even if they act out their alleged tortures, crying out of the accused, their afflictions can only be evaluated and understood through statements and words whose basis cannot be verified by others.

The basis of Thomas's knowledge is not marked explicitly, but direct experience is clearly implied (and stressed by the indication of the length of marriage and the phrase *to me*). These statements of facts, without modification, are of course a mark of stance (see 4.2.1, 8.2; Jaffe 2009b: 3), and again stand in contrast to the core accusers' unmitigated "factual" statements of affliction. The only evidential that appears in the deposition is *I hope*. *Hope* is an Assumption marker (7.3.4) and would seem to hedge Thomas's endorsement of this wife, suggesting that his wife may have been otherwise than he hopes. However, that seems unlikely in the context of the previous endorsement and stance. Rather, *hope* seems to be focused on his wish to have her *life and actions* believed rather than what is expressed in words, reinforcing the contrast between the accusers' words and Mary's lived life. This kind of counternarrative is a hallmark of the endorsing depositions disaligning the endorser with the accusers and the Salem trial CoP in general.

Thomas's endorsing deposition is peculiar in some ways in that it was written for an accused family member. Most endorsing depositions are written for/by others who were enlisted by relatives of the accused to provide character testimony. This kind of deposition can be illustrated by another deposition endorsing Mary Bradbury, which is in interesting stance conversation with Thomas Bradbury's deposition above. This deposition (given in 22) was also written by Thomas Bradbury, but is subscribed by more than 100 community members (the subscribing names are left out in the example).[15]

> (22)
> [Hand 1] Concerning mˢ Bradburies life & conversation
> Wee the Subscribers doe testifie: that it was such as became yᵉ gosp<el> shee was a louer of yᵉ ministrie [Hand 2] ∧{in all appearanc} [Hand 1] & a dilligent attender vpon gods holy ordinances, being of a curteous, & peaceable disposition & cariag: neither did any of vs (some of whom haue lived in yᵉ town {wᵗʰ her} aboue fifty yeare) ever heare or know that shee ever had any difference or falling oute wᵗʰ any of her neighboᵋs man woman or childe but was allwayes readie & willing to doe for them wᵗ laye in her power night & day, though wᵗʰ hazard of her health: or other danger: more might be spoken in her comendacon but this for the pᵋsent
>
> (*RSWH*, no. 431)

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15. All the signatures are written in Bradbury's hand, but there is no reason to believe that he forged the subscriptions.

As in Bradbury's own testimony, the "Subscribers" rely on adjectival evaluation (e.g., *courteous*, *peaceable*), but also provide larger phrasal evaluation, employing noun phrases such as *a diligent attender upon God's holy ordinances* and *lover of ministry*. This evaluation provides a piece of the value puzzle largely missing in Thomas's deposition, that of religiosity, which of course would be important for those of the Puritan faith (as well as other denominations). Notably, this deposition, whether purposefully or not, takes up the last point of Thomas's deposition about the reality of Mary's life. Indeed, while this deposition as written by Thomas has "factual" statements without overt evidential marking, a secondary recorder adds "in all appearanc," suggesting a mediation of what was seen or witnessed. As it stands, the phrase may seem ambiguous. It may suggest that Mary's behavior was for show and not her real character (*OED*, s.v. *appearance* 12a). On the other hand, it may stress that, in whatever she did, the qualities listed were evident. Of the two, the second is the more likely in this case. The recorder who added the phrase is Robert Pike, who opposed the trials and was a supporter of Mary Bradbury's (Upham 1867 [2000]: 467, 620; *RSWH*, no. 571; Grund 2007b). It is unlikely that he would add a phrase that would be seen as detrimental to her case. Instead, this phrase responds to and endorses (again, whether consciously or not) Thomas Bradbury's suggestion that Mary's behavior is above board, and that has been witnessed first-hand by community members.

These kinds of phrases are common in endorsing depositions in general, appearing in various forms, such as *according to our observation of her life and conversation* (*RSWH*, no. 254), *take (special) notice* (*RSWH*, nos. 325, 341), *what I have observed* (*RSWH*, no. 373), *to our apprehension* (*RSWH*, no. 495), *according to my best notice and observation* (*RSWH*, no. 571). Again, these phrases could be interpreted both as hedges and as expressions of certainty. If hedging, these expressions would signal the limitations inherent in direct observation (or deduction and inference from observation): who knows what the accused may have done beyond the deponent's observation (cf. Hoffer 1996: 167), or perhaps the accused feigned good behavior only to afflict the victims in spectral form (which is of course what the core accusers vociferously insist)? However, they are more likely as a rule to be intended as signaling strong endorsement in these depositions. The deponents highlight that their evidence is based on first-hand observation, which, as we have seen, is also what other deponents (core accusers and others) claim. As we saw in 7.3.2.1, this kind of "watchfulness" is exactly what would have been expected from Puritan community members: people would be attentive to any faults in others, as such faults could "rub off" on the community as a whole or on other individuals. Granted that the observation may be limited to one person, but it still underscores a pattern, and the endorsing deponents are always careful to stress the length of time that they have known the accused and witnessed their behavior and actions

(sometimes 20-to-30 years or more). This kind of positioning must have strength-ened the importance of the observation even if it is limited to one person. The appeal to visual (or inferential) evidence of course puts the deponent in opposition to the accusers whose visual evidence is clearly different. Here again we see the counternarrative that emerges in the endorsing depositions, a counternarrative that is established and emphasized with the same evidential moves as especially in the accusers' affliction narratives.

This picture is further reinforced by a stance move that is characteristic of these depositions, but rarely attested elsewhere, that of "negated evidentials." As discussed in 7.3.2.1, "negated evidential" is to some extent a misnomer. In (22), *neither did any of us ever hear or know that*… does not indicate a source of the statement, but in-stead negates the information in the *that*-clause (i.e., that she had a falling out with her neighbors) and suggests that the negated information cannot be backed up by certain epistemological bases. These negated statements are frequently emphasized by the temporal *not ever* or *never* (see also *RSWH*, nos. 317, 318, 373, 412, 495), which, like the statements of length of acquaintance, stress that the endorsement is not temporally limited but part of what they associate with the accuseds' normal behavior and character. (For negation as a stance marker, see also 8.4.)

The counternarrative strategy is also evident in the second type of endorsing deposition. What we see in these depositions is in some ways a flipside of what was shown above. The "character witness" depositions reveal stances that strongly align the deponents with the accused and indirectly disalign them with the accusers. Deponents in this second type of endorsing deposition, on the other hand, disalign sometimes very explicitly with the accusers (and sometimes less explicitly so), but infrequently exhibit a straightforward alignment with the accused. Indeed, only rarely do these depositions state what legal case they pertain to, although there are sometimes clues.

Most straightforwardly, this disalignment is signaled through negative evalua-tion, usually in the form of adjectives (or adjective phrases). In other words, one or more accusers are attacked, by emphasizing their negative qualities. As also noted in Chapter 5 and as we saw in 8.2, this approach is different from the core accusers' strategies, where character assassination is virtually never used, but we do find it in some of the depositions that center on disease, death, and suspicious behavior (8.4). The negative-adjective strategy is especially evident in a suite of depositions aimed at the accuser Sarah Bibber, as discussed in 5.3.2. In those depositions, we find strings of adjectives, similar to those in the endorsing depositions, but the eval-uation is negative, as in *very idle*, *very much given to tattling and tale-bearing*, *very much given to speaking bad words*, *very turbulent unruly*, *wishing very bad wishes*, *very bad names*, *double-tongued* (*RSWH*, nos. 364, 365, 367). Indeed, where the

endorsing depositions stress that the accused's behavior is consonant with approved and expected behavior, these evaluations of one of the accusers point to the opposite. They even suggest that the accuser possesses some of the qualities that would be expected of witches, such as unruliness and use of reprehensible language (lying, swearing, etc.; see 5.3.2, 7.3.5, 8.4). Note also that these depositions frequently employ the core accusers' favorite strategy of multal degree modifiers, scaling the description upwards: Bibber is not only idle, but very idle, not unruly, but very unruly. This is fighting words with words, or rather stance strategies with stance strategies. Similarly, observation and first-hand experience are emphasized in these depositions: the deponents *observe* and *take notice* of her behavior (although it is not always clear that some of the observations are straightforward visual experiences rather than deductions and inferences; *RSWH* nos. 364, 365, 367).

More commonly, however, the depositions that accuse or throw doubt on the character of an accuser deploy other stance strategies. They focus on reporting the accuser's own words (and those of others), which are clearly seen as incriminating, and the alignment and disalignment are more indirect. Illustrative examples are given in (23) and (24).

> (23)
> [Hand 1] the testimony of Robart Moulton sener who testifit{h} and saith that I waching with Susannah Sheldon sence she was afflicted **I heard** her **say** that the witches halled her vpone her bely through the yeard like a snacke and halled her ouer the stone walle & presently **I heard** her **Controdict** her former: discource and **said** that she Came ouer the stone wall her selfe and **I heard** her **say** that she Rid vpone a poole to boston and she **said** the diuel Caryed the poole
>
> (*RSWH*, no. 370)

> (24)
> [Hand 1] the testimony of Samuel Barton aged 28 years or thearabouts who testifieth and saith that I being at Thomas Putnams ahelping to tend the aflickted follks i heard them talking who the ~~Child~~ Children Complained of and **I heard** them **teel** mercy lewes that she Cryed out of goody Procter and mercy lewes **said** that she did not Cry out of goody procter nor nobody she **said** she did say thear she is but did nat teel them who and Thomas Putnam & his wife & others **told** her that she Cryed out of goody pro{c}ter and mercy lewes **said** if she did it was when she was out in her head for she **said** she saw nobody this being the 29 of march in the year. 1691/2 [Hand 2] John Hou<lt>on aged 23 testefieth and saith I this Deponent. was present at the same tyme. {aboue written} and **I heard** Thomas Putnam, and his wife **sayd** that mercy. Lewis saw. or named the wife of John Procter. in her fits. and **we heard** the sayd mercy Lewis **affirme** that she neuer sayd that euer she saw her
>
> (*RSWH*, no. 499)

As illustrated by (23) and (24), these depositions do not directly evaluate the character of the accuser; nor do they rely on observation. Rather, they appeal to sensory sources in the form of hearing and quotatives (*I heard them talking*, *I heard…tell/say/affirm/contradict*, *said* (x3), *told*). Indeed, establishing that what was said was also heard, at least initially, is frequent in these depositions, and presumably important. As discussed in 7.3.2.2 and as we saw in 8.3, these stance moves tap into Puritan standards of "ear-witnesses," stressing the reliability of the report. There is no overt conclusion about what the spoken words entail, although the implication seems clear enough: the accuser (or some other person) is lying, is untrustworthy, etc. That is, the speech acts presented or implied in their speech are seen as sufficient to point to doubts about the accuser's reliability and character.

The stance moves in these depositions are similar to what appears in some accuser accounts or those of their supporters. As we saw in 8.2, some accusers rely primarily or wholly on reporting conversations with the accused (see also 8.3). These range from dialogues that are clearly intended to reveal the accuseds' suspect verbal behavior to made-up fanciful discussions where the apparitions of the accused incriminate themselves or where deceased victims of witchcraft return to accuse the perpetrators. In these endorsing depositions, we see a similar assumption: that the reported speech speaks for itself, demonstrating that the accusers cannot be trusted and believed. It is unclear whether depositions based on reports primarily or wholly were seen as convincing and therefore successful contributions to the CoP's goals. Similarly, the exact official role and impact of these endorsing depositions that accuse the accusers (and others) is unclear. *RSWH* suggests that many were "possibly used at trial" or even "likely used at trial" (e.g., *RSWH*, no. 370, 372, 373), but the evidence for that appears speculative. These depositions never have the *jurat in curia* expected from documents used during trial appended to them; nor do they have Grand Jury annotations. Whatever their official role was, the intended function of these depositions in the Salem trial CoP is clear: to disalign the deponents with the accusers and the goals of the CoP and hence contest or renegotiate the workings of the CoP (which is not uncommon in CoPs in general; see 3.3.1). In so doing, they use partly the same strategies as employed by or attributed to the accusers, especially those claiming affliction; in other words, they appear to be capitalizing on what were successful stance strategies and counteracting those strategies by emphasizing the opposite. In that way, they work with the repertoire of linguistic tools that the CoP seems to have "organically" developed as part of its work, but they do so not to further the work but to challenge it. In other words, the same surface forms of stance can have different sociopragmatic import and intent, and hence show characteristics of having "indexical fields" of meanings (Eckert 2008).

8.6   Conclusion

A complex picture has emerged from considering the general stance profiles of groups of depositions, deponents, and recorders. We see clear contrastive strategies between major groupings of depositions and deponents, most evidently between depositions endorsing the accused, on the one hand, and depositions of affliction, especially those by the core accusers, and depositions endorsing the accusers, on the other. Differences are also apparent between types of depositions with accusatory material: depositions focusing on affliction emphasize certainty, conviction, and personal assault, while other depositions show more evidence of emotional responses, cognitive negotiation, and uncertainty. Overlaps are also evident. Across deposition types, we find the reliance on citing words by others. Sometimes the speech representation is reinforced by sensory evidentials of hearing, but, at other times, depositions report speech by others that is left to "speak" for itself where the implication is that the accused or the accusers reveal their own culpability through their language. Bolstering the account with the help of multal degree modifiers also cuts across depositions, although what is boosted varies with deposition type.

I have argued that these stance profiles place deponents and their evidence in different categories in terms of their role within the Salem trial CoP, and that, in some depositions and for some deponents in particular, these stance patterns were deployed very consciously as positioning acts. The inner core accuser accounts stand out in this regard, as their stance patterns play into the goals of the CoP enterprise very deliberately and strategically: they claim privileged knowledge of directly incriminating evidence of sorcery and murder through sight and conversations with specters and spirits. Indeed, they themselves embody evidence as their own personal victimhood make them central evidence for the conduct of the CoP's business of prosecuting alleged witches.

This picture is deepened but also made more complex when we consider Thomas Putnam's role in positioning the deponents and their evidence. Putnam was not alone, of course, in exercising a great deal of influence on the linguistic (re)presentation of the evidence and the deponents; others, such as Samuel Parris and Simon Willard, appear to have done the same, though on a smaller scale and not as forcefully. Putnam's influence is most evident in the depositions by the inner circle core accusers, but it extends beyond them in complex ways to other deponents and depositions. Irrespective of Putnam's motives for recording testimony in this way and working to place the depositions and deponents he wrote for in a particular role, his choices obviously have significance for how we understand stance at Salem and more broadly. This is discussed further in Chapter 9, which brings this book to a close.

"and further saith not"
Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

Stance matters.[1] As we have seen throughout the chapters of this book, the witness depositions from the Salem witch trials in 1692–1693 brim with stance language: attitudinal and emotionally-laden vocabulary that evaluates the experience and actors; downscaling and especially upscaling degree modifiers that intensify the events described; and source-marking evidentials that frame but also bolster the claimed evidence. And the markers all combine in complex ways to create varying stance profiles for different depositions, (groups of) deponents, and recorders. Such stance language is both surprising and not surprising. From a modern perspective, we expect legal evidence to be spared emotional inflection and subjective judgments; in other words, we expect it to be neutral and focused on the facts (however one conceives of the notion of "fact"). Of course, we may agree with Jaffe's (2009b: 3) point that "neutrality itself is a stance," in which case there can be no testimony nor indeed any use of language without stance. Whatever we might feel about this issue, the kinds of emotional outbursts, unbridled opinions, and moral castigations that we find in the Salem depositions are usually not court-sanctioned nowadays (cf. Stygall 1994: 138–139); and if stance language of this kind is used and allowed to stand in court, it may have a detrimental effect on witness credibility (cf. O'Barr 1982; Morrill and Facciola 1992; Holtgraves and Lasky 1999).

The late seventeenth-century proceedings at Salem were clearly different. The social and legal standards of the time had different underpinning tenets, and, as we can tell from the documents and procedures themselves, stance language was permitted, effective, and, in some contexts, highly expected in this legal context. But importantly, the stance patterns that we find in the Salem depositions are not only significant for what they tell us about this particular judicial context; they arguably exemplify and showcase the dynamics of a historical CoP. The deponents and recorders of their testimonies clearly manipulated language for social and pragmatic purposes within the Salem CoP: the stance usage reveals not only how the

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1. The chapter title quote comes from *RSWH*, no. 40.

actors position the evidence, but also themselves and others. Stance language is part of the shared repertoire of resources that the members used in order to work within, further, or even work against the CoP's goals (or enterprise), and to mutually engage and negotiate their own roles within the community. However they saw their specific roles and participation in the CoP, members used these linguistic resources variably and to varying extent, illustrating complex patterns of buy-in and push-back in the CoP's undertakings. Indeed, what we see are the complexities and details of the sociopragmatics of stance as manifested in a particular historical CoP.

Below I review in more detail the findings of this book and place them in a number of different scholarly contexts and conversations. Section 9.2 overviews the quantitative and qualitative results of the study, including the form, function, and variation of stance in the Salem depositions. In particular, I discuss the CoP underpinnings and implications of the results. More generally, I consider how to think about the Salem patterns as evidence of historical stance in light of the influence of one of the main recorders: Thomas Putnam. In 9.3, I treat some of the methodological decisions made in this study and their impact on the results and findings. In this context, I also broaden the scope to situate this synchronic-historical research within the field of English historical linguistics, arguing for the legitimate and important place of such research within the panoply of approaches to the history of English. I then turn to the broader implications and outlooks of the results of this book in 9.4, connecting with Stubbs's (1986) call for "prolonged field work" into the description of what he calls "the modal grammar of English."

9.2　Stance, sociopragmatics, and CoPs

The findings and implications of this study are manifold and multilayered: we see how stance was expressed at a particular historical point, the broad range of functions stance performed, and the larger contextual underpinnings of stance. Although not a comprehensive charting of all means of stance (see 9.3), the study documents the rich inventory of stance markers at the users' disposal, from single verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, to phrases and clauses. Importantly, while some lexical items have explicit stance value (such as *grievously* and *prudent*), others are only revealed to be stance-related through their contextual use (e.g., *in my heart*). That is not a new insight of course, as the context-dependent construal of stance has been widely attested, especially in sociolinguistic and discourse-analytical work, but also in work within "evaluation" (e.g., Englebretson 2007a; Jaffe 2009a; Hunston 2011). This finding does stress, however, the limits of automatic, corpus-based approaches to historical stance that focus on particular lexical and lexico-grammatical patterns (see further 9.3). As Hunston (2007, 2011) in particular has shown, corpus-based

approaches can be instrumental in identifying "hidden" stance-related meanings, but such meanings are not transparent and must be carefully reconstructed in context. That is, detailed studies that provide collocational and contextual information for individual lexical items or sets of items can reconstruct stance meanings; only after this painstaking recovery process can less transparent stance features be added to the inventory that is then searched automatically. Increasingly sophisticated corpus annotation and corpus annotation tools may hold a great deal of potential in this regard, but semantic and functional annotation is still in the early stages of development (e.g., Archer 2014: 270–274).

The functions of stance in the Salem documents are similarly wide-ranging. On a basic level, we see depositions that record stance moves when deponents express their own or others' emotional or physical states (such as *affrighted*, *drooping*), their positioning of an event (e.g., *strange*, *unusual*, *supernatural*), their evaluation of others or their behavior (e.g., *crossly*, *scornfully*, *loving*), or their assessment of the severity of affliction or illness (e.g., *most grievously*, *sorely*, *greatly*). Stance is also involved in more complex positioning moves that, again, need to be contextually recovered. Whether intended or not, expression of uncertainty, confusion, and cognitive negotiation (e.g., *I thought I saw…*), which are often associated with a lower level of commitment to the information presented, could have the opposite effect of bolstering an accusation of witchcraft: the claimed eeriness and the extraordinary nature of the events point to a phenomenon that goes beyond human apprehension and hence puts it in the realm of the supernatural. Appeals to visual evidence of and conversations with specters and ghosts, by contrast, are claims of "privileged personal knowledge," and as such a positioning move "in pursuit of the social capital that accrues to being recognized as having authentic and authoritative knowledge" (Jaffe 2009b: 7): "no one else possesses this knowledge, and since it is central to your prosecution of the case, I am central to your case," the deponent claims.

I have attempted to show throughout this book that understanding these complexities of stance at Salem involves connecting stance with the CoP that I argue developed during the Salem witch trials (see Chapter 3). Using the concept of a CoP helps us to come to grips (to some extent) with the tricky concept of "context." As I have already indicated above by referring to "contextual" readings, stance is conditioned by what people do in particular situations and by factors that influence their behavior and moves. Naturally, these factors are many and multifarious, but the CoP concept allows us to bring together many of the factors under one umbrella and to clarify their nature. For example, when we talk about the "legal context" influencing the stance choices made by different deponents and recorders, that is of course accurate, but also a fairly vague and broad statement. Instead, by looking at how the CoP negotiated and instantiated the legal context, we get a firmer and more concrete sense of what "legal context" may mean. The CoP concept of course

does not solve all the problems of context, a much discussed and theorized topic (see, e.g., Archer 2017 for a review), and there are likely contextual influences that extend beyond the CoP. But what the CoP concept does help us to do is to drill down into specifics, to see what happens on the ground, so to speak, of social interactions between people who are pursuing some kind of joint goal and who need to engage with each other in order to reach that goal (cf. Moore 2019).

One of the strengths of the CoP framework for the purposes of this study is the way it dovetails with stance. Importantly, as I have noted in Chapter 4 and shown throughout, I follow Du Bois's (2007: 163) framing of stance as a triangle, where "the stancetaker (1) evaluates an object, (2) positions a subject (usually the self), and (3) aligns with other subjects." All the parts of the triangle may not be equally clear in all stance moves at Salem; we are not always certain what the exact positioning of self and others might be. However, by situating the stancetaking within the CoP, we can see that many moves had an effect on and likely were motivated by how the Salem trial CoP worked and how the deponents and recorders saw and negotiated their roles within the CoP vis-à-vis others. Indeed, one of the cornerstones of a CoP, according to Wenger (1998: 83), is "the discourse by which members create meaningful statements about the world, as well as styles by which they express their forms of membership and their identities as members." The discourse is part of the shared repertoire of practices that enables the mutual engagement to happen and the enterprise of the CoP to be carried out. The stance language is not the same as the "discourse" of the community, which is by necessity broader, but it is a significant part of it. Especially, we see how different stance choices helped to develop "the styles by which [the members] express their forms of membership and their identities as members" (Wenger 1998: 83). The variable usage, I argue, entailed variable membership claims, but also variable acceptance of the conduct of the CoP's enterprise.

Specifically, as we saw in Chapter 8, the Salem depositions reveal a number of different stance profiles among groups of depositions, deponents, and recorders. There are depositions that focus on narratives of death, disease, suspicious behavior, unexplained events, and the like, and there are depositions that are concerned with the alleged personal affliction by specters. Yet others provide supporting testimony, either for the accusers or for the accused. The differences in stance profiles are to some extent due to differences in the types of experiences adduced, but, for the most part, the stance profiles cannot be pinned on varying, purported events and experiences. In the depositions claiming personal affliction, although it would be possible to do so, virtually no explicit stance is expressed regarding the accused (whether positive or negative); neither is there expression of uncertainty or fright in the face of specters, ghosts, and horrifying physical assaults; those moves are found in depositions that allege mostly non-affliction experience with witchcraft (such

as encounters with strange and often murderous animals, or bouts of inexplicable disease and death of cattle). Instead, in the affliction narratives, the factuality of the experiences is relentlessly hammered home without hedging and even bolstered by evidential practices (such as the use of SEE) and degree modification (e.g., *most dreadfully*, *most grievously*, *vehemently*). This kind of stance language is in turn reinforced by a group of depositions written by and containing the statements of a number of prominent men in the community. Not only do they support the accusers; they do so in the language of the accusers, which those men (especially Thomas Putnam and Samuel Parris) appear to have partly or wholly helped to construct in the first place.

Countering these accusations are those depositions that endorse the accused either by playing up the virtues of an accused's life and behavior or by attempting to assassinate the character of an accuser. This is partly done with stance language that is not frequently attested in the other types of depositions (such as positive or negative adjectival and adverbial description). However, it is also accomplished by fighting stance with stance, where "negated evidentials" are a means to negate not only the evidence purported by the accusers but also the evidential stance strategies (esp., SEE) that the accusers' depositions (and those of the accuser endorsers) frequently deploy.

These different patterns, I argue, amount to different positioning moves. The deponents endorsing the accused expressed stances and used stance language that implicitly and explicitly disaligned them with the core accusers and indirectly with the CoP. But they did so by working within the CoP, adopting many of the linguistic stance features used by the accusers and pushing back against their stances and stance usage. All the deponents who filed evidence against an accused, on the other hand, presumably aimed to contribute to the Salem CoP's enterprise of bringing witches to justice, and the stance language used to position the evidence as relevant presumably contributed to that enterprise. Of course, not all depositions were accepted into evidence at the trials or Grand Jury hearings, but, overall, these deponents must have been seen as central members of the CoP. My argument is, however, that the deponents and recorders of the inner core and to some extent the outer core and aspirational accusers went one step further. They attempted through the stance language to show that without the core accusers the CoP could not carry out its enterprise: in being afflicted by specters and in having a direct channel to the specters and their "ghostly victims," the core accusers were special, beyond "normal" witnesses; they could influence and even make the case against an accused. They hence claim, I argue, that they should be part of the core of the CoP that dictated the conduct and the very goal of the CoP: in other words, it is a power move. The deponents "scream" on the page, upscaling their sufferings, matching their sufferings to the actionable offenses as stated in the formal, legal indictments,

and insisting on their certainty and their near-death suffering. Indeed, the textual mimics reality: the core accusers (and associates) would fall into extended fits, perform various acts of contortion and suffering, and cry out of the accused. These courtroom histrionics are captured by the textual histrionics so that we see the different semiotic systems in which the core accusers expressed their identity and position in the Salem CoP. In some contexts, they may have reinforced each other. In both the Grand Jury hearings and during the trials before the Court of Oyer and Terminer, the accusers would have been at hand to swear to their testimony as their depositions were read out aloud. At this time, they also appear to have acted out their sufferings, as if they were attacked anew in a similar fashion to what was being described in their written testimonies, which were now being read to the court (see, e.g., Cotton Mather 1693: 85–86; Ray 2015: 80).

Or this is the way the recorders of the core accuser testimony fashioned and meshed the semiotic systems. Throughout this book, and in Chapter 8 in particular, we have seen the complex role and influence of the recorder. Some recorder patterns still remain untraceable since we do not know the identity of the recorder for a number of depositions (especially those in the category of death, disease, suspicious behavior, and unexplained events). However, in the case of the core accuser depositions, especially those of the inner core, a limited few recorders dominate the picture, and the stance patterns show clear, though not uncomplicated, correlation with recorder. Thomas Putnam stands out in this regard. His depositions for the core accusers reveal the focus on marking "privileged knowledge" and certainty (through SEE), on near-death experience (*almost* CHOKE), and on upscaled suffering (*most grievously*, *most dreadfully*, TORTURE, TORMENT). His motivation for framing the depositions in this way remains obscure. We know that he was involved in trying to influence the trials in other ways (such as writing a letter to the magistrates; Rosenthal 1993: 163–164; Ray 2015: 103); he was a backer of the unpopular minister Samuel Parris; and he had long-standing feuds with other members of the Salem Village community (such as the Nurses, Porters, and his half-brother Joseph Putnam). He may thus have had sinister motives, working through the girls to accomplish his own goals of removing his perceived enemies (see, esp., Robinson 1991: 58–77, 104–108, 119, 121).[2] But there is no conclusive evidence of that. Instead, he may simply have translated the experiences he perceived into the appropriate and most forceful legal dress he could; indeed, he could be seen as trying to match the verbal guise of the depositions to the screaming and suffering in

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2. In Arthur Miller's *Crucible*, Thomas Putnam is accused of scheming to get rid of his enemies and acquire additional land through accusations of witchcraft and of manipulating some of the accusers to accomplish his goals. As seen in aside comments in Act 1, Miller was aware that many depositions from the trials were written by Putnam.

the courtroom. Making the message and its medium consistent no doubt mattered: it unifies the group (irrespective of who the unifier is and whether the unification is externally and/or internally imposed), and it lays claim to setting the linguistic standards for at least part of the discourse of the CoP. If this is true, Putnam's ultimate goal in doing so, for himself and for the deponents, cannot be fully traced.

Although his motives remain unclear, Putnam clearly represents "an active shaping force behind [the accusers'] depositions" (Hiltunen and Peikola 2007: 60), which total about 100 (if we include the inner and outer core as well as aspirational accusers), or almost a quarter of the depositions in this study. Some of the stance features discussed in this book are particularly common or exclusively found in these very depositions. What does it mean for a linguistic study, then, to be so heavily influenced – even conditioned – by the patterns that can be ascribed more or less to one person? Although much is sometimes made of "uneven" datasets of this kind, my argument is that it should not mean much. Complexities of this kind are characteristic of and inherent in historical communities and historical texts, which often come with "baggage," as I have shown for the Salem depositions in Chapter 2. Sometimes these complexities remain underneath the surface, because the sociohistorical contexts and production circumstances remain uninterrogated in linguistic studies (see, e.g., Grund 2012b; see also 9.3). At other times, they surface, but are treated by removing the "outliers," that is, texts or informants that show widely diverging patterns or that have an "undue" influence on overall patterns (see, e.g., Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 140, 144, 155, 217). My argument is that since these complexities are inherent in the materials, we must seriously consider them, fully incorporate them in our studies, and carefully account for them. This is especially the case for a feature such as stance that is so context dependent. Indeed, tracing Putnam's scribal endeavors and relating stance patterns to them has enhanced our understanding of the sociopragmatic potentials of stance in a historical CoP. Ignoring the scribal aspect is obviously detrimental, as it would obscure the patterns and even make them misleading; excluding the linguistic patterns as idiosyncratic would similarly be to obscure language that had a significant role in this particular CoP and hence to make it impossible to understand stance in the Salem depositions. We are at the mercy of our data, and our role as researchers is to account for it, however it is constituted.

9.3   Stance methodology and synchronic-historical research

It is of course a truism to say that a study's methodological decisions and theoretical perspectives influence the nature of the study and the dataset considered. But this is in some ways a particularly acute issue for research on stance, a concept

that can be delimited in various ways and investigated with a number of different tools and approaches. An ideal way to collect data and study stance remains elusive. As I outlined in Chapter 4, I decided to take a more expansive view of stance than employed in the "grammar of stance" or lexical approaches that are common in research on English. I adopted a combinatory perspective, drawing on corpus-based research, but also taking advantage of insights from sociolinguistics and discourse analysis. While this approach allowed me to cast a wider net and consider functional aspects in greater detail, it discouraged a comprehensive listing of all stance features or stances attested in the depositions. As research on stance in this vein has indicated, such a listing is not feasible, nor perhaps productive, and even "grammar of stance" studies, which are concerned with a (lexico-grammatical) slice of stance, struggle with the question of identifying and comprehensively recording stance. Instead, with a corpus-assisted and text-driven approach, I identified three functional domains where stance expressions were particularly common and central: evaluation of the central event or experience and the participants (Chapter 5); degree modification (Chapter 6); and the epistemological source of the information provided (Chapter 7). I also considered on a more limited and qualitative basis an assortment of other features that were prominent in some (groups of) depositions. This procedure captured the major categories that emerged as central frequency-wise and functionally. The focus on frequency and cross-deposition patterns means that more local patterns involved in highly personal and focused interaction are left for future study (although some groups of depositions and deponents were treated in detail). Such studies would no doubt deepen our understanding of the dynamics revealed in this book, but such potential micro-patterns are bound to be heavily colored by the major stance strategies revealed here.

Obviously, the approach that I chose is not appropriate for all materials and all research questions related to stance. Indeed, my argument is not that it should replace other perspectives, but rather that this situated historical approach offers a perspective that complements and expands on especially large-scale corpus-based approaches that are primarily lexical or lexico-grammatical. In keeping with sociolinguistic and discourse-analytical approaches to stance, this study has shown that stance is construed in context, and that features have stance functions that are only recoverable by drilling down into the details of the sociohistorical context (see 9.2). Indeed, the text-historical (who wrote the texts, and how were they recorded and used?), the social (what were the deponents and recorders trying to accomplish?), and the communal (how did the CoP operate?) are all indispensable, if complex, factors to consider in the study of stance at Salem (and elsewhere). And I have argued that these aspects (to some degree) come together in the concept of a CoP.

Of course, part of the puzzle that is historical stance is to see how stance resources develop short-term as well as long-term in the history of English. But we also need to recognize the complex sociopragmatic conditions of stance as it is embedded in different *synchronic-historical* communities and the concerns of their members in carrying out personal and communal goals and in interacting with each other. Only when we ground interpretations of stance in the specific extralinguistic conditions of the usage can we hope to fully understand what it is that people in past periods were trying to accomplish with their language. Such an approach is consonant with research in modern contexts that emphasizes the variable and negotiated use of language in social situations and by social actors, in line with Eckert's (2012) second and third wave of sociolinguistics. In other words, we need the historical-synchronic in addition to the diachronic.

With a focus on synchrony rather than diachrony, my approach and the results of this study have broader implications for how we conceptualize research in English historical linguistics. Present-day English historical linguistics is often stated to be concerned with cross-temporal perspectives and with change (see, e.g., Hickey 2017); the importance of synchronic-historical variation is sometimes acknowledged, even though the main articulation of the field stays focused on change (e.g., Nevalainen and Traugott 2012: 3, 6, 12; Kytö and Pahta 2016: 1, 8). Pragmaphilological approaches in historical pragmatics, synchronic approaches in historical sociolinguistics, and the merger of the pragmatic and social in historical sociopragmatics are starting to show that other perspectives are necessary for us to fully understand and theorize historical English (see, e.g., Culpeper 2011; Mazzon 2016; Grund 2017b).[3] This book on stance at Salem joins this growing body of research. It is clear from this book that, just like present-day English, historical English is a tool that allowed users to accomplish their social goals. That should not surprise us of course, but such a perspective is sometimes lost in the focus on change. Also, as I noted in Chapter 2 and in 9.2, historical texts come with a great deal of "baggage" as they are complex constructions by writers and communities and the result of textual transmission, sometimes across long periods of time (cf. Grund 2006, 2012b). In corpora, such baggage can be difficult, if not impossible, to trace, but it doesn't make it less influential. Synchronic approaches focusing on variation thus have much to offer. More generally, one might wonder why a narrative about change should be more important or interesting than stability or historical-synchronic variation. Complex dynamics in the formation of the field of English historical linguistics are no doubt behind some of these research narratives

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3. As I have argued elsewhere, the development of the field of English historical linguistics is complex and non-linear, and the articulation of the field in handbooks and textbooks may be lagging behind what researchers in the field are doing (Grund 2018b, 2019).

and the valuation of such narratives. But if the ultimate goal is to increase our understanding of English and its history (whether seen as a process or as individual historical instantiations), all approaches are necessary.

9.4 Outlook

In 1986, Michael Stubbs made the call for "prolonged fieldwork" into "a modal grammar of English" based on the insight that "the expression of commitment and detachment, or of modality in all its senses, can be seen as a central organizing principle in language" (Stubbs 1986: 4). Although this was prior to most research on stance (as his choice of the term "modality" partly indicates), his call has clearly been taken up by stance researchers (in the widest sense of the term; see 4.2). Stubbs's (1986) focus is on a grammar of stance (or modality in his terms), which is most closely related to "grammar of stance" approaches, and he does not mention historical connections. But, to assemble a full picture of stance, we clearly need multiple, complementary perspectives and approaches, as the various social, discourse-analytical, and corpus-based approaches to modern and historical data have already highlighted. My study adds a synchronic-historical piece of this puzzle, emphasizing the role of the communal.

Little research exists on the sociopragmatics of English in early North America, let alone on stance (see 1.2), and this book-length study thus breaks new ground. Of course, other geo-historical pieces need to be added to fill out the puzzle of stance in the history of English. As I have indicated, even the Salem piece could be refined and sharpened at the edges, by considering even more local, textual patterns associated with particular deponents and recorders; factors such as different localities (Salem Village vs. Salem Town vs. Andover) and different stages of the trial process may also be important, but they cannot be delineated with certainty and in detail. And, as I have emphasized, stance is not only linguistic, but expressed through interacting semiotic systems manifested in various texts and descriptions of the trials, some of which likely cannot be captured fully or at all from the evidence we have (much of the textual record survives, but some has been lost and other things were never committed to paper). Irrespective of other currents and undercurrents, the larger patterns, especially those associated with the inner core (and some outer and associated) accuser would not change, as they span time and place.

It is perhaps easy to dismiss these patterns and the Salem sources as idiosyncratic, but Salem is as idiosyncratic as any other social and communicative situation where people use language to accomplish certain local, interactive, pragmatic goals. The dynamics of stance reside in such local goals, I would argue. So when we want to paint a global picture of stance in the history of English, we need to go local.

RSWH depositions included in the study

The numbers refer to the labeling of the documents in *RSWH*. If the document contains more than one text, the number of depositions in the document is given within parentheses (e.g., (2) means that two depositions appear in the document).

7, 8 (2), 9
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30 (2), 31, 32, 35, 36, 37, 38
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130 (3), 134, 135 (2), 136, 137, 138, 139
140 (2), 141, 142 (2), 148 (2), 149
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402 (2), 403, 404, 405, 407, 408, 409
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457 (2), 458
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560 (2), 561 (2), 567 (6), 569
570 (2), 571 (3), 572, 573 (2), 574, 575
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610, 617 (3)
622 (3), 625 (2), 628 (3), 629
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640 (2), 643, 644, 645, 646 (4), 647, 648
653, 656
662 (2), 667, 668, 669
670, 671, 672
684, 685, 686, 687
706, 707
745, 746 (2)
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783, 784, 785
792

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Index

Anchored in historical pragmatics, historical sociolinguistics, and corpus linguistics, this book weaves together a powerful narrative of the significance of stance marking in the history of English. Focusing on the community of practice that developed during the witch trials in Salem (Massachusetts) in 1692–1693, it showcases how witnesses and the recorders of their ca. 450 depositions deployed linguistic features to signal the evaluation of experiences with alleged witchcraft, the intensification of those experiences, and the sources of the witnesses' knowledge. The resulting stance profiles for groups of depositions, witnesses, and recorders highlight varying strategies of claiming, supporting, and boosting the importance of the evidence and the role of the witnesses within the community of practice. With its innovative focus on sociopragmatic variation in a historical community, the book demonstrates the essential contribution of synchronic-historical research to the analysis, description, and theorization of stance and historical English more broadly.

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